MOTHER MARY GONZAGA

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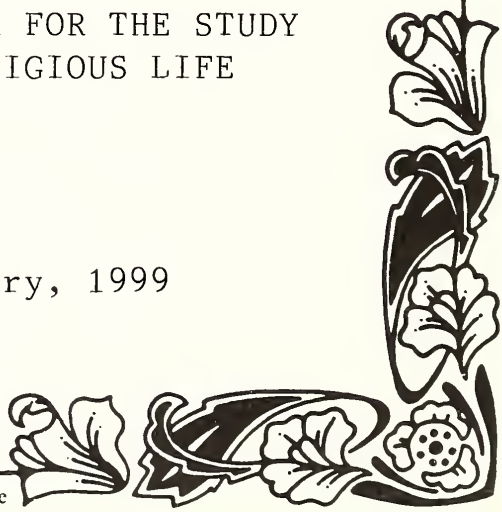

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Mother M. Gonzaga O'Brien
(Foundress of Maine Community)

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Ever Your devoted
S. M. Gonzaga

Memoir of
Mother Mary Gonzaga O'Brien

WITH A PREFACE

BY

THE RIGHT REV. GEORGE ALBERT GUERTIN, D.D.

BY A SISTER OF MERCY

CONVENT OF MERCY, MANCHESTER, N. H.

(Sister M. Catherine Gaudy)

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PREFACE

During the past few years, through war and pestilence, the world has been awakened to a new appreciation of the noble virtue of devotion to our neighbor and to our country as expressed by the now familiar term "service." Men were inspired to heroic action in the discovery of their power to aid their fellowmen. They learned with gratified surprise that the sacrifice such effort entailed brought a peace they had never found in self-indulgence. Spiritual forces struggled with the materialistic temper of the times, and prevailed. The new consciousness that life held things that were dearer than life quickened the pulse of the age. Men were transformed in the realization of the glory of suffering for other men, and they who excelled in the practical expression of this faith were extolled by all. They were the heroes of service.

All this is well. It is right that these exemplars should restore man's ever decreasing confidence in human nature, intensify his sense of brotherhood, augment his love for his neighbor. We need all the benefits we can derive from the splendor of the deeds of our heroes, and we gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness. But this very admiration prompts us to look elsewhere for illustrations of their qualities; and we find these illustrations in quite another field, in such perfection that the heroism called forth

by a passing crisis pales into comparative insignificance. We refer to the service which the Religious Communities of the Catholic Church have rendered in continuity through the centuries of their existence. These holy men and women, spurred on by an all-consuming love of God, and knowing that labor for Him is both an expression of love and a means of increasing that love, have given themselves to our Divine Lord in the person of the poor, the sick and the ignorant among His children. In their faith in His assurance "As long as you do it to one of these my least brethren you did it to me," they have supernaturalized man's natural desire to render service to his neighbor.

It is because their labors are undertaken in obedience to Divine inspiration that Religious Communities are able to render humanity a kind of service that is incomprehensible to unaided human reason. To fit themselves for such service men and women deliberately relinquish even the most legitimate pleasures of the human heart. They leave father and mother and kindred, they sacrifice the opportunity to make for themselves the home of their choice, that they may give their affection, their energy, their ability, their all, to God, in the person of His little ones, His sick, and His poor. They bind themselves by the three holy vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience—and the world looks on and does not understand, for to the world the ascetic life is folly, even though it was by the practice of these virtues that Christ redeemed the world. Pov-

erty, obscurity, obedience and suffering are, then, the insignia of Christ's chosen, and over and over again, adown the centuries, the flower of the world's manhood and womanhood have joyously donned this livery and gone forth in His Name to win to Him a world that knows Him not.

The services of these heroes of the Faith have been rendered so unobtrusively as to fail to win the attention of the casual observer to whom the religious life is merely a deplorable waste. Yet even the hurried reading of this little volume, a memoir of a pioneer Sister of Mercy, Mother Mary Gonzaga, will convey to the most incredulous the conviction that a life consecrated to God in religion finds its opportunities of service a thousand-fold multiplied. In Mother Gonzaga they will find a soul working out its own salvation while laboring unceasingly to provide for others' spiritual and temporal assistance. They will observe that a nun may live in constant communion with God and yet be solicitous for even the bodily comforts and material conveniences of all within her sphere, being especially mindful of the needs of the afflicted. They will note the influence of the Religious in the education of the boy and girl to chivalrous manliness and pure-hearted womanliness; they will find it in the conformity to God's will and the confidence in His Mercy which prevails at the bedside of the dying whom they tend; in the reformation of the wayward, in the care of the orphan and the abandoned, the aged and the helpless, in the general power for

good. And having thus observed that Religious love and serve their neighbor even as Christ loved and served them, they will no longer underestimate the value of the Religious Life.

Animated by spiritual ideals, altogether unworldly in her standards, Mother Gonzaga was an illustrious exemplar of the virtues of her Order. Her influence—and it would be difficult to convey any adequate idea of the extent of that influence—was due to her religious spirit and the holiness of her life. None knew better than she what prayer might accomplish; she was always a child in the hand of God, and her abiding confidence in Him was, perhaps, the loveliest attribute of her character. She prayed as a loving child might talk to a tender and devoted father. All her works were built of prayer. She served God in all things with the same simple directness. She was always watchful and attentive for each manifestation of the Divine Will, knowing well how to accommodate herself to God's designs when they conflicted with her previous plans. She was truly a remarkable woman, full of gentle dignity, staunch loyalty, gracious kindliness, religious prudence, wonderful zeal and beautiful simplicity. Readers will find reflections of these virtues in this story of her life.

Mother Gonzaga is now enjoying the reward that has come to her in the acknowledgment, "I was hungry and you gave Me to eat; thirsty and you

gave Me to drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; naked and you clothed Me; sick and you visited Me. I was in prison, and you came to Me. . . . Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to Me." (Matthew 25:40.)

✠ George Albert Guertin.

Mercy Day, 1920.

CHAPTER I

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

"Lo! heaven stopped under the roof on the morn
When it brought there only a baby."

ALMOST within sound of the Bells of Shandon, on the twenty-fifth of October, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred thirty-four, special joy prevailed at Woodview Cottage, the home of John O'Brien and his wife, Sarah Ahern O'Brien, for a baby daughter had come to bring greater happiness and sunshine into the household. She was the fourth of their children, two of whom had died in infancy. Their little son, Michael Joseph, was two years old when the honor of senior baby was conferred upon him by the infant sister. This child was destined by God for a life which could be compared to one long, grand hymn of praise and prayer, so sweetly harmonious that it might recall the echoes of those far-famed poetic chimes. She received her mother's name, Sarah Anne, when she was baptized in the parish church by her uncle, the Reverend Michael O'Brien. Long years after, when she became a religious, she was known as Sister Mary Gonzaga.

Woodview Cottage stood amid the charming scenery surrounding Mallow, Northeast Cork, in lovely, historic Erin—that "beautiful isle of the sea" whose faithful children, imbued with solid principles, have borne for centuries the cross of persecu-

tion, in the cause of religion and patriotism. Significant and many have been the appellations applied to this native land of the strong, warm-hearted Celt. A touching one, indeed, was used recently by a revered and scholarly Churchman in addressing a distinguished and patriotic audience, when he called Ireland "the Nun among the nations of Europe." This figurative phrase expresses much relative to the history of Erin, that should appeal to every fair-minded person. Certainly Mother Mary Gonzaga realized the full force of its meaning, for her heart and mind were one with the Irish martyr race, and her sweetest memories were of the ever-green fields and the meadow-lark's song. It could almost be surmised without any irreverence that on her journey to heaven she would have been willing to delay "a bit" that her spirit might pass through the scenes of her childhood

"To gather the tangled shamrocks
And the hawthorne's fragrant snow,
That she laid on our Lady's altar
In the golden long ago.

To see the blush on the heather,
And the foxglove's crimson glow,
And the daises she used to gather
In the golden long ago."

The brief sketch given here of Mother Mary Gonzaga's childhood and early womanhood was told by herself. Her infancy seems to have been a

period of great happiness for her parents and those who took care of her. Year by year she developed into a healthy, strong-willed child, but her mother gradually grew more delicate until the care of her little Sarah, only five years of age, became too much for her. Some relatives visited Woodview Cottage, and offered to take the little maiden to live with them. Reluctantly her parents consented, but when a few months had elapsed their loneliness knew no bounds, and Sarah was recalled. Her life at home, however, was of short duration, for she was only seven when Mrs. O'Brien, the very pattern of a mother in affection and piety, was called by our Heavenly Father to the eternal abode of the saints.

This first taste of life's sadness caused the child many tears, for she had a tender, loving heart, and ever had been the idolized queen of the household. Even Michael Joseph, her brother, had made her his inseparable companion, and her athletic characteristics were the pride of the boy's life. In all their games he naturally took the lead, but for the most part he was forced to relinquish points of conquest in favor of his autocratic sister, who gracefully accepted the lion's share on all occasions with a sense of masterfulness that makes us think she was a veritable little Caesar on the playground. Now she must leave father and brother and home, and the separation was to be much longer than the orphan girl anticipated when her relatives placed her in their Irish jaunting-car and departed from the family hearth, which soon passed to strangers.

Sarah O'Brien preserved through life a frank, strong affection for these relatives who brought her to their refined, well-ordered home and cared for her as if she were their own child. True, they were too indulgent to her, and their methods of training were more fond than wise, but her father, who was an easy-going, courteous Irish gentleman, agreeable and popular but not practical, would not have approved any severe course of discipline for his motherless daughter.

Though arbitrary on many occasions, yet the little girl already possessed great faith and piety, and the beautiful traits she often manifested revealed the innocent soul and the heart of gold sometimes veiled by her giddy pranks and love of mischief. Her naughty deeds were frequent, but even in those early years her intense zeal for God's greater honor and glory was so noticeable that it raised her above the level of ordinary children in the estimation of the non-Catholic relatives with whom she lived. For they were just and upright people, and they foresaw the formation of a noble type of character in the God-loving little one, fearless in her efforts to champion the Faith of our Fathers even before she was old enough to read all the pages in her catechism of Christian Doctrine.

She on her part was so impressed with the strict observance of Sunday practised in her relatives' home, that to the latest period of her life she would recall with respectful admiration the example they placed before her of sanctifying the Lord's Day.

The entire household observed complete rest from labor and amusement. The piano was closed, her dolls were put away, her games and her hobby-horse were placed in a large closet, while she was sent to Mass and Sunday School with a faithful Catholic maid whom Sarah loved very much, and who taught her many of the attractive devotions which she practised through life. She also learned the Catechism and a great part of the Bible, for that humble servant, who performed her duty perfectly, was a queen at heart in nobility of purpose and apostolic zeal for souls. The rest of the family attended Protestant service and returned home to spend the greater part of the afternoon reading and studying the Bible. Such exactitude to God's command, "Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day," may seem extreme, but a little of the same strictness in these lax days would be commendable.

Any one who knew Sarah O'Brien in after years would find it hard to believe that even a spark of jealousy could enter her great heart, but she often amused the Sisters at recreation with a story showing that this was among her faults in early childhood. She said that in her adopted home there was a boy cousin who could sing "like a thrush," while she, loving music passionately, could not sing a note. She was so jealous that she made up her mind she hated her gifted relative, who was a wag as well as a singer. Many a childish quarrel grew out of her antagonistic spirit regarding his musical ability. At last he determined to have a mild revenge on the

little lady who sometimes forgot to practise the old maxim, "Little girls should be seen but not heard." Although she was a past mistress in wit and mischief, well able to fight her own battles, yet almost from babyhood her religious vocation was evident to those who witnessed her in her serious moments, though the guileless child thought her desire to be a Sister was her own secret. Nothing, however, escaped the lad of musical propensities, and when he decided that revenge was sweet he was not mistaken in aiming his blow where it would embarrass most. Consequently the little Sarah was constrained to listen from morning until evening, in the presence of guests and playmates, in season and out of season, while her vindictive cousin sang with vehemence what she termed the "anti-conventual song":

> "I won't be a nun,—I shan't be a nun,
> I'm too fond of pleasure to be a nun,"

accompanied by gestures and grimaces such as only his genius could invent.

CHAPTER II

EARLY TRAINING—THE CONVENT SCHOOL

"The angels in loving homage pressed close to the altar stair,
While heart to heart with Jesus the children knelt in prayer."

WHEN Sarah was about eight years and six months old, she was taken from the care and tutorship of the lady who had acted as her governess, and placed in the private school of the Misses Reedy. These ladies were in their "forties," prim and neat to an exasperating degree, but they possessed the qualities and the education that fitted them to be capable instructors. Miss Susan was assigned to teach the little girl, who at first found restraint almost unbearable. But she gained self-control as her school mistress began to understand some of the causes of her external faults—frequently only childish buoyancy and impulsiveness.

Sarah loved books and reading, and the methods of teaching employed by Miss Reedy resulted in the acquisition of much general knowledge and in real mental expansion. The child studied far in advance of pupils of that age at the present time, and the years of womanhood proved that she had retained all she then learned. Texts of Scripture, poems, and gems from the standard authors were fresh in her memory even in advanced age.

Her vacations were spent at the rectory of her uncle, the Reverend Michael O'Brien. Full of the

apostolic spirit, he was only one priest among very many others who, Christ-like in charity, belonged absolutely to God and to the service of their Divine Master. Persecution had rendered them only more faithful and devoted—the Consolation of the Church in the days of its distress in Ireland. He made these rest days of his little niece exceedingly happy for her, and holy, too, in the true meaning of genuine holiness—without dullness and without any air of repression or gloom. He furnished the kind of recreation that she enjoyed most, but he appointed his hours for religious instruction, and required her to be prompt in her attendance. He fortified her with a fund of spiritual knowledge against the day of trial, and educated her soul so carefully that it must have added many a star to his own crown of glory.

No one ever drank in sacred instruction more eagerly than did this motherless child. Her uncle's words about compensating evil by good, about love and kindness in thought, word, and deed to the neighbor, about sorrow and reparation for sin, about leading a useful life and doing good in the world, about fair play and justice alike to friend and enemy, were never forgotten by his pupil either in theory or in practice. Her Reverend Instructor found her well-informed in the common school studies, and, combined with effervescence and joyousness of disposition, he discerned strength of will and delicacy of feeling. She was heart and soul in what she did. No one could run so fast or lead the

games so well, and often, as the Pastor wished, the neighboring peasant children came to play with Sarah. On these occasions she managed that the poorer children should be the winners in their simple sports. Young as she was, her pity for their needs and her respect for their rights could not be hidden. When play was over, she was all earnestness in the tasks that followed; therefore the highest hopes could be reasonably entertained for her future. This was comforting to Father O'Brien, and well might he be satisfied with her uprightness in word and in deed as well as with her simple faith and practical ideas of piety. Yet she was far from being a perfect child, for she was hard to manage and had exterior imperfections which, like gnats, would try the patience of a saint.

Later on, she was sent to the Presentation Nuns to be instructed for her First Holy Communion. In July, 1845, in the Chapel of the Presentation Convent, Bandon, County Cork, she received our Lord for the first time, and fervent indeed had been her preparation for this great event of every Catholic child's life, which Father Faber compares to a foretaste of Paradise:

"Oh, heaven, I think, must be alway
Quite like a First Communion Day,
With love so sweet and joy so strange—
Only that heaven will never change!"

The Presentation Nuns also prepared her for Confirmation, which was administered a few weeks

afterward, in the Parish Church of Bandon, County Cork, by the Right Reverend John Murphy, D.D. The little soldier of Christ, only eleven years of age, received Confirmation with a lively faith and an ardent piety that gave her spiritual strength through a devoted life until, a veteran in God's service, she went forth to her Creator with a conquest of souls that must have delighted the angels around His throne. On that Confirmation Day, kneeling before the altar in Bandon Church, she resolved to consecrate her life to God in the performance of the works of mercy.

Her musical cousin, Edward Carroll, was among the first in her adopted home to congratulate her on the happy event. Long years after, in recalling this, she said: "I told my cousin, or, as he called himself, my adopted brother, all I could about the ceremony and the words of the Bishop in his sermon to the little volunteers about to become soldiers of Jesus Christ. He seemed to enter into my sentiments, and I gave him no information that he could not understand and appreciate. From Catholic associations, friends, reading, and other sources, he had learned a great deal about the Church; thus, when I related how touched I was during the exhortation and how I hid my face in my hands and cried some tears of real joy, he bade me to keep right on being good and never to be ashamed of my religion, but to be proud of it, for I had the true Faith. We talked for a long time, and I tried to express all that was in my mind regarding my future life, but I

found it difficult to do so. When I look back now, I can understand that those thoughts and feelings were apostolic instincts striving for entrance and growth in my soul. I simply tried to make my cousin Edward comprehend those intuitions, but I was not very successful. He laughed at my childish enthusiasm and said: 'Oh, you *will* be a nun!' I remember well I replied, 'Oh, *you* will be a Catholic!' His prophecy came true; mine did not, so far as I know."

After her Confirmation the Carroll family, non-Catholics themselves, placed this child of their adoption in a convent boarding-school noted for its success in imparting to its pupils a solid training in womanly accomplishments, intellectual education, and the heart culture which religion bestows—the Academy of the Ursulines at Blackrock, two miles from the city of Cork, on the River Lee. Here she was sent in 1845.

Sarah's relatives were not disappointed in their selection of a school, for year by year proved the wisdom of their choice. No word of ours could add to the praise bestowed on the religious by their worthy pupil. Repeatedly has she told us that their system was marvelous in instilling into their students common sense, solid practical piety, strength of character, and nobility of heart united to a modest reserve and delicacy. Many a time she bemoaned her own defects, for she regretted her bluntness of speech and occasional abruptness of manner, which she said would have been wholly corrected if she

had been docile in following the firm but kind discipline and training of her Ursuline teachers. We are certain, however, that her humility exaggerated her slight faults of surprise, for all are agreed that she was essentially a lady, an excellent example of the efficient methods of teaching at her Alma Mater. Perhaps no other woman who has lived in New England did so much good in a lifetime along charitable and sociological lines as did this one-time pupil of an Irish convent boarding-school. Any impetuosity of manner or word she was surprised into in her young days only served to keep her humble, and may be compared to the dross concealing the nugget of gold, or to the minute flaws on the precious diamond. Mother M. Gonzaga was a true religious, and no one could be more humble, submissive, obedient to authority, patient, and master of herself than this gentle, great-hearted nun.

During her student days she was much impressed by the manner of life of the Sisters, their cheerful devotedness, solid learning, and strict observance of their Rule. She ever remembered her convent school as a kind of Paradise on earth. Those years were for her the period of inspiration, of high ideals, and of the development of sublime principles so nearly allied to the practice of the evangelical counsels. She grew more powerfully attracted to God and longed to be a religious. Yet, notwithstanding these spiritual favors, she said that she did not try very hard to control her pride and her desire to do as she pleased. Her teachers testified

more favorably in regard to her conduct, for they noted her charity, her thoughtfulness for others, her reverence for everybody and everything connected with religion, and her practical spirit of self-sacrifice and zeal. This was crowned by a tender and abiding devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, which remained to console and animate her through the labors and vicissitudes of a long life.

CHAPTER III

ACADEMIC EDUCATION—YOUTH

"Grow in soul-stainlessness; grow in heart-beauty."

WITH the Ursulines at Blackrock, Sarah O'Brien developed into a sensible and capable young lady. Being of a practical turn of mind, she looked for results, a characteristic which was even more notably hers as a religious, and she discerned for herself that she was here receiving excellent preparation for her life work. In after years she never tired of speaking grateful words of appreciation of the daily period of religious instruction. This consisted of recitations in Scripture history, which, as she said, strengthened and broadened the spiritual foundation. The pupils were drilled in memorizing passages from the Old and the New Testament, particularly the Psalms, the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles. Butler's Catechism, with Scriptural proofs, was explained and studied. It would seem that our predecessors in the Faith were quick in perceiving the powerful influence and beauty of religion, and considered it a necessary subject in courses of studies.

The taste for reading cultivated in the young girl was a splendid stimulus to her literary studies in her academic course. Her training in the English classics must have been thorough, for her knowledge of the standard authors and their works was surprising to some of our modern scholars. Even in

old age, when she had worn the habit of a religious for over sixty years, she would repeat lengthy passages from the Holy Bible. Occasionally, also, in conversation, she quoted classical extracts in prose and poetry with perfect ease. This was partly due to her habit of daily reading.

No accurate knowledge exists regarding her study of the higher mathematics. It is probable that she gave little attention to these studies, but her business dealings and her systematic arrangement of accounts and vouchers in the offices to which she was appointed by her Superiors, proved that some of our multi-millionaires were not more shrewd in financial calculations nor more methodical in the duties of an accountant.

About thirty years ago—in the early nineties, when she was a senior religious—she sometimes entertained the novices and the newly-professed nuns at recreation with an account of some of the modes of physical training in use at her Alma Mater. The account was generally drawn forth by the remarks of some one of the company on her erect position in walking and sitting. Usually she began her story with, "You know the bones of a child are soft and easily shaped, but they harden as the years pass by." This prelude over, she would describe many exercises which she practised in her youthful days at Blackrock. Finally would come the back-board story, the "best seller" for every new band of novices.

"We had a daily exercise in securing a correct

carriage of the body, which gave good results. The pupil stood with the top of her head pushed up as far as possible to straighten out the spinal column. Then a thin board about six and a half inches wide and about two feet long was placed against the back and strapped around the body. In this erect position she walked up and down the playground for a few minutes. Still in armor, she exercised for sixteen counts in sitting erect and arranging the hands whilst sitting. The board was removed, and her attention directed to the relative height of the shoulders. It was an ordeal at first, but we did not mind because we were told that it would give an erect carriage; besides, children in those days would not dream of disobeying the directions of their superiors."

Her schooldays quickly passed, and now the time drew near for her to go forth from the guidance of her faithful teachers. Her mind was busy planning for the future. She had many friends among the Presentation Nuns, whose foundress, Nano Nagle, was a relative of Sarah O'Brien's ancestors, only two generations back. She loved and respected the Ursulines, but from childhood, when she first learned about the Sisters of Mercy from the lips of a maid in her adopted home, she seemed to have a presentiment that some day she would enter their Order. And at school, during the years of 1847 and 1848 with their aftermath of suffering and desolation, she had both seen with her own eyes and heard from others of the heroic work of these Sis-

ters among the stricken and the destitute, which edified all who knew them, and their singular devotion and charity sank deep into her heart.

Edward Carroll, the cousin in whom Sarah confided, had gone abroad on the continent, journeying from there to India, where he accepted a position as teacher in the schools of Bombay. In writing to him, she told him of her decision to enter a religious Order, and of her anxiety to find the Community for which God had given her a special vocation. She ended by telling him that she must come to a conclusion with great care, for she did not want human respect or feeling to impair the purity of her intention to please God for His own sake. In his reply Edward Carroll said: "Go to America and be a Sister of Mercy. The country is new and democratic, with an ideal government, and the Order is young, with a wide field for the exercise of the works of mercy."

These words had weight in her deliberations, but as she was only seventeen, the Superior of the Ursulines advised her to accept a position as monitress in the National Schools in the town of Macroom. Her spiritual director and her teachers thought that practice in the class room would aid her in her choice because it would give her experience, and time to learn about different religious Orders and their works. It would also give her an idea of the labor, the enthusiasm, and the infinite patience required, if she decided to join a teaching Order. While engaged in this work, she met a

young schoolmaster who had been graduated from the Training School of Dublin, a gifted English scholar whom, in after years, she met again amid very different surroundings. Both of them must have realized in the ancient, historic town of Macroom, the wrongs of lovely Ireland, a land which they would soon leave for America's freedom-loving shores, and there must have burned within them some of the patriotism of John Boyle O'Reilly when he wrote:

"No treason we bring from Erin—nor bring we shame nor guilt!
The sword we hold may be broken, but we have not dropped the hilt;
The wreath we bear to Columbia is twisted of thorns, not bays;
And the songs we sing are saddened with the thought of desolate days;
But the hearts we bring for Freedom are washed in the surge of tears,
And we claim our right by a People's fight outliving a thousand years."

Sarah O'Brien spent part of her vacations in Cork, but the greater part in her adopted home in the suburbs of Bandon. If she had been their sister by birth, greater affection could not have been lavished on her by the members of this family, nor more reverent consideration shown for her religious opinions and practices. She had a clear understand-

ing of the Faith, and her practical love of it in all circumstances aroused admiration and respect.

It was especially during these years that she had the opportunity of beholding and enjoying the beautiful scenery of her native land. A lady from the same neighborhood writes: "With several members of her adopted family she toured the south of Ireland in a kind of jaunting-car, called a jingle. It was somewhat after the style of a 'bus', used before trains were common. The name comes from the peculiar sound made when the vehicle was in operation. It was used for excursions and pleasure parties, accommodating several passengers, seated comfortably facing each other. The car was open, that all might enjoy the charming views and breathe the invigorating Irish air. It can be said without any spirit of boastfulness that a more beautiful country one could not easily find—hills wooded, rich, cultivated valleys, glimpses of the water where the rivers flow into the ocean, delightful parks, old castles, neat cottages, and pretty villas, not to speak of the wondrous lakes and their surroundings. There are many good-sized towns and some summer resorts. As you approach the sea, the cultivated fertility changes to huge rocks standing out against the lashings of the old Atlantic, the sentinels and symbols of Ireland and its people. Ah, the pity of it all! The children of the noble Celtic race hunted and persecuted and driven as exiles from their own fair isle—with its rare industrial and commercial advantages—to every country of

the globe, to be given the rights of manhood and the posts of trust denied to them at home!"

In the summer of 1853, those who directed Miss O'Brien considered that she had had sufficient time for reflection and decision as to the Order and the place where she could do the most good. In this choice of vocation, the whole matter was left to herself. Her ideal was that apostolic woman, Nano Nagle, who had lived nearly a century before, and who, under penal restrictions—with a license from the "Bishop of the Church of England" in Cork—had taught all day long a school for the children of the poor and who had "wandered, lantern in hand, shrouded in a peasant's cloak, from north to south, from east to west, before the morning's dawn and after the sun's setting, on her missions of mercy, not leaving a poor sufferer in the city unvisited." But some years after the death of Nano Nagle in 1784, her Institute, the Sisters of the Charitable Instruction, became a cloistered Order, whose members took the vow of enclosure, with the name Presentation Nuns. They could then no longer visit the sick poor; therefore the Right Reverend Bishop Murphy brought the Sisters of Mercy to Cork to take their places in the active works of charity. This foundation was sent from the parent house at Baggot Street, Dublin, and Mother Catherine McAuley accompanied the foundresses.

The Order of Mercy had been established in Cork only ten years when a terrible visitation of failure of crops, potato blight, and famine fell

upon the land. It was a heart-rending time. To use Mother M. Gonzaga's words: "It seemed as if during the night the Destroying Angel sped through the entire island, blighting the vegetable kingdom." The infected atmosphere from decaying vegetation was stifling, and brought disease in its train. The crop failure and the famine of 1847, the famine fever in 1848, and the cholera in 1849 make one of the saddest pages in Ireland's sad history. It would seem as if the Sisters of Mercy had been raised up by God for this particular crisis. The bishops and the pastors of the different dioceses and parishes summoned them to the aid of the afflicted. Those self-sacrificing nuns were seen everywhere, ministering to the wants of the hungry, the sick, and the dying. Dispensaries were opened, hospitals served or taken in charge, and the dwellings of the destitute, suffering people visited.

They came forth from their convent cloister at the call of mercy and carried with them into the streets, lanes, and alleys the solemn silence of their monastic home and the meek spirit of their foundress. A holy priest who had lived his youth in Ireland wrote concerning them: "The great black bag that hung from their arm was eagerly looked at by little boys and welcomed to the homes of the sick and the hungry. There was food in those bags and there was medicine, too. There was a balm for every wound when the Sisters of Mercy entered the homes of the citizens. Old and young felt the influence of their presence. The sad-hearted father,

the weeping mother, the hungry child, found consolation. The sick were nursed and often saved from what seemed worse than death to anticipate—for they deemed it a lasting disgrace to be 'carried away' to a work-house hospital or to the public fever-sheds."

As desolation increased, the Sisters were admitted to all the public emergency workhouses, and they served these places during the scourge. Afterwards, they took charge of workhouses and conducted hospitals of their own. They also distributed food and clothing twice a day at their dispensaries, at their convents, and in the homes of hunger-patients. They received liberal alms for the stricken from Rome, America, England, and from wealthy benefactors at home. Father Matthew, the great Apostle of Temperance, was among the clergymen who gave generously to the nuns for their needy ones. Large quantities of rice, maize, and biscuits were sent by the members of the Society of Friends for distribution by the Sisters.

CHAPTER IV

FOLLOWING THE DIVINE CALL—THE NOVITIATE

"At Thy fair Feet, my King, I come to Thee,
In Love, Obedience, and Poverty."

ON the last day of July, 1853, firmly resolved to go to America and become a Sister of Mercy, Sarah O'Brien went to the convent of Saint Marie's of the Isle to lay her plans before the Superior, Mother M. Josephine Warde. Already the Bishop and her confessor had blessed her decision and congratulated her on the missionary field, "white to harvest," awaiting her. They firmly believed that the blessing of heaven would be upon her zeal for souls. When the gentle Mother Josephine learned of the girl's aspirations and noble motives, she admired the courage and the faith of the ardent young soul eager to begin her life's work in God's service.

It was a frequent occurrence for Mother M. Josephine's sister, Rev. Mother M. Xavier Warde, the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy in the United States, to write to the Superior of Saint Marie's of the Isle and other convents of Mercy in Ireland for subjects who might wish to enter her American novitiates to prepare for their missionary labors in this country. A letter containing a request of this kind had come to Mother M. Josephine from her sister a short time before her interview with Sarah O'Brien, from Providence, Rhode Island, where

Mother Warde was then Superior. The letter ended with: "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers to do His work."

At once, through Mother M. Josephine, the young candidate applied for admission to the Providence Community. This convent had been founded in 1851 by Rev. Mother Xavier Warde who, with four companions, at the call of Bishop O'Reilly came from Pittsburgh, the first foundation of the Sisters of Mercy in the United States. Their first New England convent was described by one of the foundresses as "a cradle of poverty." This prospect of hardship, however, did not prevent several highly accomplished ladies from joining the Community, and in a short time it had increased fourfold. Indeed, only six months after the Sisters of Mercy settled in Providence, Mother Warde wrote to Pittsburgh: "Our good Mother M. Josephine Lombard took charge of the novitiate on the feast of our Lady of Mercy. She has seven novices and seven postulants to lead to perfection. They are truly promising Sisters." One of these she described as having the soul of music, declaring, "You would never tire of hearing her masterly touch on the piano and the organ."

In the latter part of August, 1853, Sarah O'Brien received a letter from this great-hearted Superior, of whom her own nuns have said: "She could win the birds off the bushes." Therefore we leave our readers to imagine the whole-souled acceptance she tendered to the brave volunteer destined to be one

of the pioneers of the Sisters of Mercy in New England. No time was lost, for Sarah repaired immediately to Saint Marie's of the Isle where, with the aid of Mother Josephine and her Community, preparations were quickly made and in a few weeks she set sail for America.

The Presentation Nuns, the Ursulines, and the Sisters of Mercy were most thoughtful for the noble girl—not yet nineteen—who was turning away forever from relatives, home, and country to become one of those of whom our Lord said: "And everyone that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting." The Carroll family requested the privilege of paying all her expenses. She traveled in charge of two Sisters of Charity, who were also coming to the United States.

On landing in New York, Sarah O'Brien was greeted by some ladies commissioned by Rev. Mother Xavier Warde to meet her at the wharf. Before evening of the second day after her arrival in America, she had received a warm welcome to the Convent of Mercy in Providence. The next morning she was given the postulant's lace cap and veil. Six months later, in April, 1854, she received the religious habit and white veil of a novice, with the name, Sister Mary Gonzaga. Thus she placed herself under the patronage of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, the novice-saint of the Society of Jesus. The

Right Rev. Bernard O'Reilly, D.D., who had brought the Sisters to his diocese, presided at the ceremony of reception, as at that time the Bishop of Hartford had Rhode Island and Connecticut under his episcopal jurisdiction. Sister Mary Gonzaga made her religious profession on April 24, 1856, at the hands of Rev. William O'Reilly, who was then administrator, his brother, Bishop O'Reilly, having been lost at sea three months before.

We learn from the chronicles that when Sister M. Gonzaga was a novice in Providence, the convent was a very commonplace house; the novitiate and the chapel, though small and poor, were yet the best rooms in the building. The altar before which she consecrated herself to God and His sacred service was a plain bit of carpentry painted white. Paper roses on tall sticks in simple vases, and some cheap candlesticks, were the only ornaments. The altar cloths and everything else pertaining to the chapel itself were exquisitely clean and neat, but there was no trace of decorative beauty.

A finished attic was the dormitory. In winter the Sisters suffered from cold in this unheated apartment. In the novitiate the novices were crowded around a narrow table, and, as Mother Austin Carroll wrote, "In this poor room they were trained to labor under difficult circumstances for their own perfection and for their duties of teaching the young, instructing adults, and visiting the poor and the sick." In those days there was no button to push; electricity had not come into use,

nor even illuminating gas to any extent, but by the light of candles and kerosene lamps the Sisters did a good deal of studying and reading.

Seated at her writing-desk in the novitiate, Sister M. Gonzaga studied in detail the geography of Rhode Island and Connecticut, in preparation for the class work assigned her. In after years she was wont to tell how she would invariably open the text-book to the map of New Hampshire; she did this so often that it irritated her, and once she soliloquized, "How stupid!" No thought entered her mind that one day her name would be a household word in the homes of that Granite State, as a pioneer of charitable organization and welfare work.

In Providence, the Sisters had free schools in different parts of the city. The classes were large at both day and evening sessions. There was a good deal of Americanization accomplished, but that term was not used then, nor did the public officials recognize this element in the Sisters' work until the nuns had suffered in silence for several years from opposition and persecution. In Connecticut, the Sisters had schools at Hartford and New Haven. Sister M. Gonzaga taught in the schools of Providence and Hartford when it was a risk for the Sisters to appear on the streets. In their daily walks to and from school, and on the visitation of the sick, they seldom escaped having their clothing marked with crosses of chalk, and often crude epithets were hurled at them.

At that early period in the growth of Rhode

Island, the greater part of the Catholic population of Providence consisted of immigrants who had come to this country in the great exodus from Ireland. They were poor and socially weak from the effects of persecution suffered by them and by their ancestors in the land of their birth, but they had brave hearts, with firm faith and the Irish traditional love of learning. Consequently they were anxious to give their children the educational advantages that they had been denied.

Here was a field for the zeal of Sister M. Gonzaga and her companions that Saint Paul might have envied! The situation was inspiring and made a glowing picture to write about to distant relatives, but the success of the work was not so great as to exclude the cross. Time and again the windows of the poor dwelling of the nuns were broken. Once, at midnight, the glass and sashes of all the windows were shattered. Often after their day's toil they sat at their well-merited recreation amid a shower of missiles. However, this state of affairs had no power to lessen the spirit of charity and happiness that reigned within the convent. These sensational evenings gave the Sisters many a good fright at the time, and many a hearty laugh afterward.

Some members of an absurd society called the Know-Nothings were the instigators of all this annoyance, and of more serious riots and dangers for the Sisters. These haters of the Church had made the threat that every convent erected on the

free soil of New England would risk the fate of the Ursuline Academy, burned near Boston only a few years before Mother Warde made her foundation at Providence. In justice to the respectable non-Catholic citizens it must be said that they did not countenance this unreasonable society nor its ignorant proceedings. The majority of American non-Catholics are among the stanch friends of the nuns in every city of the United States, and certainly Mother M. Gonzaga experienced this in her work for the general good.

One amusing incident of the early days she often told, which was considered worth recording in the *Annals*. We give it in her own words: "As a rule, we bore all kinds of insolence in silence. When our clothing was covered with mud or marked with crosses, we simply brushed these garments until the traces of mud or chalk disappeared. One day we were surrounded by a mob of urchins, each of whom strove to outdo the other in impertinence. I turned 'right about face,' and, looking steadily at our assailants, I came to the conclusion that we had reached the point where patience ceases to be a virtue. Slipping my hand along a row of heads of every color but gray, I took off the caps of six or eight and, with my companion, I walked on pretty briskly, my 'spoils' covered by the large cloak worn in those days over the religious habit. 'Gimme my cap! Gimme my cap!' was shouted on all sides, but we kept moving. At last we turned into the hallway

of the convent, the bare-headed lads following and begging for their property. I approached each separately, gave him a telling rebuke, and restored to him his cap."

CHAPTER V

EARLY FOUNDATION DAYS IN MANCHESTER

"See the field that lies before us,
See the work we have to do!"

IN 1858, Father McDonald, the first pastor of Saint Anne's, and the pioneer of Catholic Education in New Hampshire, consulted his Bishop, the Right Reverend David W. Bacon, concerning his plans for the education of the children of his congregation, and the works of mercy in his parish. Bishop Bacon was glad to aid the zealous priest in his enterprise—an enterprise entailing much responsibility and anxiety, but one which would be blessed as only God can bless. His Lordship lost no time in entreating Bishop McFarland to send a few Sisters of Mercy to Manchester, praising at the same time the good Father's wonderful love for souls, and his indisputable reputation for sanctity, in non-Catholic circles as well as among his own people. Bishop McFarland could see clearly Bishop Bacon's point of view, but he was reluctant to spare the Sisters, as their services were needed in Rhode Island and Connecticut. However, he accompanied Bishop Bacon to the Parent-house, and the two prelates pleaded Father McDonald's cause with success, for Mother Warde was full of the missionary spirit, and little escaped the fire of her zeal.

She was to be the foundress of this important mission, and Sister M. Gonzaga, another Saint

Paul in zealous undertakings, was her choice for assistant in her new field of labor. Sister M. Gonzaga was immediately notified in Hartford, where she was teaching, and answered the summons of her Superiors without delay. The other foundresses were Sister M. Rose Davis, a talented musician; Sister M. Agatha Mulcahy, a novice; Sister M. Joanna Fogarty; and a postulant, Miss Veronica Dillon. The story of the Manchester foundation is given at length in the *Life of Reverend Mother M. Xavier Warde;* therefore we will not enter into details here. Suffice it to say that the saintly Father McDonald had a home awaiting the Sisters—almost palatial for those days—thoroughly conventual in design and appearance, with furnishings at once suitable and religious. He and his good people had provided everything needed, from cellar to attic. The nuns had nothing to do but to assist at the ceremony of the blessing and to take possession of their convent.

When Father McDonald, in company with two other clergymen, met the little band of missionaries at Nashua Junction, it is probable that no exterior signs of joy were manifested by him, but his sincere welcome, given in a few words to these pioneer religious teachers of New Hampshire, came from as true and as honest a heart as ever voiced Godspeed to a worthy undertaking. From that day, the Feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel—July 16, 1858—when he led them to their convent home in the Granite State, until the morning, twenty-seven

years later, when he was stricken by his last sickness, he was a firm support to the Sisters of Mercy in New Hampshire and to their works for the honor and glory of God.

On the eve of the departure of the little band of missionaries, the Right Reverend Bishop McFarland sent the following letter to the Right Reverend Bishop Bacon:

Providence, Rhode Island,
July 15, 1858.

Right Reverend Dear Sir:—

I beg leave to introduce to your kindest notice Mother M. Xavier Warde and her companions, who leave for Manchester tomorrow morning. I have every reason to hope that this new mission will be a most successful one.

Mother Warde has long been accustomed to govern. During her seven years' residence in Providence, I can say, after examining the accounts and conditions of the convent, that the management has been at once prudent and energetic. She gained for herself and her community the highest respect from intelligent Protestants no less than from Catholics. The community grew very rapidly, yet the members seem to have the proper spirit of their Order. They have managed to support themselves without being a burden to the diocese.

Her companions are among the most promising subjects of our Community. Their Superiors part from them with very great reluctance and only on

my representing to them that a new foundation should have able and most exemplary members. They leave with the affectionate respect of all the Sisters.

Hoping that they will be as prosperous in their new home as they deserve to be, and that they will always find in you a friend and father, I remain, Right Reverend dear Sir, with great respect,

Your friend and brother in Christ,

✠ Francis P. McFarland,
Bishop of Hartford.

To Right Reverend David W. Bacon, D.D.,
Portland, Maine.

The Sisters were in Manchester only a few weeks when several young ladies applied for admission to the Community, and the number of members increased rapidly. Mother M. Gonzaga was the first Assistant Superior, which office she filled for twelve consecutive years. During that period the Sisters became so accustomed to address her as Mother that she continued to be given that title until her death. Except the names of Father McDonald and Bishop Bradley, perhaps no other name has been so familiar to the citizens of Manchester as that of Mother Gonzaga.

When the Sisters came to Manchester, what is now the beautiful residential part—the North End—was a tract of land covered with trees and underwood. The West Side was forest land, and the

portion of the city below Saint Agnes' School gave no signs of its present populous and prosperous condition. East Manchester was a forest. South Manchester was partly settled, but near to the streets were fields and woods. The convent was built on a hill; hence the name, Mount Saint Mary's, but since the grading and beautifying of the city, the site appears but slightly elevated. In the early days there was no fence around the grounds. On summer evenings the Sisters recreated in the garden back of the building, walking up and down the paths. Generally, interested onlookers viewed them from the surrounding streets, while others, more sociable, came to the garden limit to salute them and to make inquiries concerning their life and works. These people, friendly non-Catholics, found Reverend Mother M. Xavier Warde and the Community responsive and appreciative. On Saturday afternoons it was the duty of Mother M. Gonzaga and Sister M. Agatha to conduct visitors through the convent, which was an object of curiosity for many.

The Sisters began at once the visitation of the sick and the organization of instruction classes. Mother Gonzaga was the leader and inspiration in these works. From her visitation register and her lists of her instruction classes, containing information about her many converts, we can only be astonished that one simple little woman could accomplish so much for the salvation of souls. She trained others for helpers, but she never relinquished her whole-souled share in the works of mercy. For

over sixty years she labored in Manchester, and even at eighty-six, the Wednesday before she retired for the last time to her humble religious cell, she had gone to a quarter of the city a mile from the convent, to give encouragement and help to one of her favorite enterprises.

The coming of the Sisters of Mercy to Manchester was a cause of joy to many who had heard much about the Order in Ireland, and some of whom even recalled the devotedness of the nuns during the years of famine and plague. The memory of their meekness and delicacy on their missions of mercy seems to have given these people almost more comfort than the charitable deeds then performed. To have Sisters among them now to encourage and elevate them, made hardships and toil appear trivial. A kind Providence surely directed all this, for anything Father McDonald or the Sisters said or did had a weight and an unction all its own. This was an ideal field for Mother M. Gonzaga's zeal. Her missionary aspirations had full scope, and the good pastor, without seeming to notice, lent aid to every project and created an atmosphere of appreciation that made her efforts fruitful beyond her fondest hopes.

CHAPTER VI

PIONEER EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS

"Scatter the lavish seeds of kindness:
Love's golden blossom will grow to light."

SISTER M. GONZAGA ever remained interested in the Providence and Hartford Communities. Since the day she pronounced her vows in the poor little chapel of Saint Xavier's Convent, Providence, a long line of novices in those two dioceses have consecrated their lives to the service of God, but none among them ever proved more loyal than she in love for the Order, or performed more faithful service in the good works authorized by the Church. Hers was the devoted, true heart that never forgot, and her unwavering affection for those who labored with her as well as for those who trained her in religious perfection never lost any of its sincere ardor as distance and years intervened. To the writer of the *Annals* she gave testimony of her esteem for her Mistress of Novices, Mother M. Josephine Lombard, in the following words: "A more simple, devoted Sister of Mency never went to join the celestial choirs. She was a living copy of the Rule, and a fearless defender of the principles of perfection in the religious life as opposed to vanity and worldliness. Whoever knew her knew a religious after God's own heart. She was ready at all times to engage in the simplest duties, or to take the place of the most junior Sister."

To give an idea of the spirit of zeal which animated these faithful ones we have only to cite the words of the *Annals:* "Not content with the hard toil of teaching in miserable buildings, in which crude conditions necessarily prevailed, the Sisters in the parochial schools took advantage of the intermission from noon until two o'clock to arrange the altar in the church, to attend to the lamp of olive oil burning before the Blessed Sacrament, and to visit the sick and the dying in the neighborhood. When going to these works of mercy, they were often almost lost in snow-drifts. Poor clothing, scant fare, comfortless apartments, incessant work, were the portion of the early members, but because they labored for God in the spirit of their vocation, He poured out upon their guileless souls the blessings of joy and gladness."

Bishops and pastors in all places where there are Sisters have left nothing in their power undone not only to improve the courses of study but to provide buildings, large, bright, sanitary, and well-equipped with facilities for teaching. Teachers and pupils, encouraged by the sincere appreciation of prelates and clergy, have endeavored year by year to raise the standards of scholarship and are ambitious for the best results. The makeshift structures of pioneer days of educational effort in New England have almost disappeared, and the priests and their good people have sacrificed much—indeed more than some can ever know—to erect beautiful, well-planned school-buildings for their children.

The religious teachers have always been students, and deeply interested in their noble work. They have ever striven to keep abreast of the times and have readily adopted new educational methods when these would give stimulus to their pupils or in any way improve their system of education. This system, according to the spirit of the Church, includes the training of the intellect and the will, and such care for the physical nature as is necessary for the health of the child, that body, soul, mind, and heart may be developed by a thorough Christian education for that highest-prized portion of the flock—the children.

When the number of Sisters had increased sufficiently to supply the parish schools and the extra teachers required for a boarding-school, Mount Saint Mary's Academy was opened in the north wing of the convent. Mother Gonzaga often mentioned with pardonable pride the fact that she had much to do with the increase of the number of resident students, by impressing on Mother Warde the necessity of advertising if the school were to receive pupils from other sections of the country. Many were registered from the city as day pupils. Several of these were non-Catholics, who, with their families, have proved kind friends to the Sisters on many occasions, and whom Mother Gonzaga kept in touch with until the end of her life. While the Catholic people gave unstintingly to her works, she could count also hundreds of devoted non-Catholic friends in the city and in the state, who helped

generously and quietly to support her charitable institutions. She followed the Catholic mind of the Church in having all these open to every person suffering or in need of the Sisters' care, without regard to sect, party, or creed.

Mother Gonzaga's first work in the parish schools of Manchester was as assistant to Mr. Thomas Corcoran when he assumed the duties of principal of the Park Street school. She and Sister M. Agatha were the senior teachers, but there were other junior nuns who did faithful work with the boys. As has been noted, Mr. Corcoran and Mother M. Gonzaga had met before, in the National schools of Macroom. Both were to wield exceptional influence in the city of Manchester. Mr. Corcoran was a competent Catholic educator, absolutely devoted to his vocation. Of scholarly attainments himself, he inspired a love of study in those connected with him. He esteemed Mother Gonzaga highly, and regarded her as a model Sister of Mercy. His own life, in regularity and prayerfulness, was not unlike that of a religious. Father McDonald had unbounded confidence in him, and he assisted the good pastor in many other ways than in the education of the boys. It would be difficult to speak too highly of the men who went forth from the building that is now but a memory. Among these were a bishop and more than fifty priests. Good citizens—business men, lawyers, doctors, and others—remember with affection their teachers in the old Park Street school.

In the early days the girls of Father McDonald's

far-reaching parish had their schoolrooms in what is now Saint Anne's Chapel. They did not remain there long, for the faithful pastor built a large school on the corner of Union and Laurel streets, to which all the girls were transferred. Later he built St. Agnes's school, and after his death the Reverend John J. Lyons, P.R., Father McDonald's grand-nephew and his successor as pastor of Saint Anne's, built the McDonald school.

For many years after their arrival in Manchester, Mother Gonzaga and a staff of Sisters taught night school, that those who were obliged to work during the day might have an opportunity of receiving an English education. Other members of the Community gave instruction in Christian Doctrine to grown boys and girls. Every three months these older boys and girls assembled each evening for a week previous to the reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist, and Mother Gonzaga led the band of Sisters who explained the Catechism to them and helped them to prepare with fervor for this sacred duty. The Sunday School then, as now, was an important feature in the training of the children, and no one was more successful in this than Mother Gonzaga. Thus her life was a busy one, yet more remained to be accomplished by her willing efforts for the welfare of the neighbor and the salvation of souls. She never avoided toil and fatigue, for she was convinced that "Every sacrifice that is united to His Sacrifice who gave all for love of us, bears fruit an hundredfold."

Too, no one understood more clearly that "If the soul is right, the whole life is right; and right thinking, correct views, proper and powerful incentives make the soul right."

CHAPTER VII

BEGINNINGS OF THE PARISH SODALITIES

"Faithful in life's opening day: faithful all along the way."

NO sooner were the schools in successful operation than Father McDonald invited a priest of the Society of Jesus to come from Boston to aid in the organization of a system of sodalities in the parish he loved and served so well. The small boys were formed into the sodality of the Infant Jesus; the small girls had the happy privilege of becoming members of the Angel Guardian sodality; the young ladies were enrolled in the Children of Mary; and the married ladies formed the Rosary Society. The older working boys were organized into the Young Men's Sodality, with Mother M. Gonzaga in charge.

This last-named society had many aims. It had its social features, its opportunities for intellectual improvement, its devotional side, and last, but by no means least, the provision for instruction in its Constitution and By-laws. For Mother Gonzaga was a social worker to the core, and an experienced leader and teacher in that line of endeavor has said: "All social workers agree that the only way to effect permanent good is by instruction." No one labored more earnestly than she for temporal welfare, but spiritual needs were what she considered of utmost importance. Steadfastly she acted on the principle that a single soul is more precious in the sight of God than all the bodies in the universe.

At one time the Young Men's Sodality had a large membership, all regular attendants at the weekly meetings held in what is now Saint Anne's chapel. The programs were made very interesting by the nun in charge as well as by the coöperation, enthusiasm, eagerness for improvement, and talent of the young men, who never grew old—for when some of them were fathers of families, the organization still retained the name of Mother Gonzaga's Young Men's Sodality. The Civil War thinned the ranks of the association, for a large number of valiant soldiers went forth from it. Many, too, of the "boys" who marched away to the sound of the fife and drum were, or had been, pupils of the Park Street grammar school. To attempt a description of those brave lads, their letters, and their manifestations of gratitude and respect for Mother Gonzaga and the Sisters would require a volume. The lives of many of them were sacrificed on blood-stained battlefields, where they died for the preservation of the Union. They gave their lives that the nation might live.

"On fame's eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread,
But glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead."

In the early seventies, literary activity flourished in the sodality, and at special meetings dramas of Shakespeare found a place on the program. Many of the older members recall one occasion when

Mother Gonzaga was purchasing books and other requisites to establish a library for the men. Her "Cash received" did not equal her "Cash paid out." She suggested that *The Merchant of Venice* be staged in a city auditorium, called in those days a public hall. As an inducement for the task of producing anything that called for such an able cast of characters, she emphasized the literary profit it would afford the audience, and the possible financial profit it would bring for the library.

Father McDonald encouraged the enterprise. He even promised to engage a finished Shakespearean scholar to teach the prospective actors. He was as good as his word, and at his request a young lawyer, one of the ablest in the city, coached the amateur artists with such efficiency that, according to historical records, the management was compelled to produce the play on two successive evenings to accommodate the throngs that flocked to the ticket office. It is true that the tutor had the eloquence and the *savoir faire* that distinguish the legal profession, to give stimulus to his men in training, but it is also true that in them he had the talent of genuine actors.

An obstacle was encountered at the beginning that threatened failure, but projects worth while are surrounded at first with difficulties to be surmounted. It looked as if no one could be found who possessed the requisite fitness for the rôle of Portia. Providentially, however, a young student from Holy Cross College came home for a short vacation. He

could have impersonated Saint Aloysius to perfection, but when Mother Gonzaga pleaded with him to take the part of Portia, he hesitated. However, he was too courteous to refuse her. His act of gracious condescension saved the day, and his graceful rendition of his difficult rôle won the enthusiastic applause of the crowded house. Shylock also did so well that the audience hissed him—greatly to his discomfiture; it took all the tact of the coach to make him realize how good was the acting that called forth such a tribute. Many a time since then has *The Merchant of Venice* been given in Manchester by theatrical "stars," but it is doubtful if ever such enthusiastic appreciation has greeted their efforts as was bestowed on Mother Gonzaga's Shakespearean performers.

CHAPTER VIII

THE XAVERIAN UNION

"We are pledged to gain Him triumphs and win glory for His Crown."

THE following history of the Xaverian Union was written for this memoir by a member who did much to make that organization the successful social factor it was for many years. He was one of its many members who were never absent from its meetings until they left the city to prepare for the holy priesthood. He was also one of the most popular of the Xaverian Union boys, trusted and remembered with pride and affection by Mother Gonzaga to the last.

"The Xaverian Union was founded nearly forty years ago by Mother M. Gonzaga. At her request Father McDonald invited an illustrious Jesuit to organize it. I do not recall his name, but he was certainly an able memebr of the Society of Jesus. Since Saint Francis Xavier was the inspiration, the idea came *via* the Jesuits, from the then famous Xaverian Union of the 16th Street College of New York. I may be pardoned for using a boy's vocabulary when I say, *that* Xaverian Union had nothing on ours. In after years, however, we found some amusement in teasing Mother Gonzaga by telling her that Xavier was suggestive of India, and therefore a fit original for the derivative applied to her band of vigorous youths whom she gathered weekly

to scratch the paint in the then new north sacristy of Saint Anne's.

"Her plans were excellent, and while she was in charge they were well carried out. It was a literary society without social features in the beginning; these came afterwards. The boys' ages averaged sixteen years, and every Sunday afternoon these ambitious lads met for two, and even three, hours to debate, to deliver orations, original or classical, and to render other instructive and interesting numbers on a well-filled program. I do not think any of us were poets, but sometimes we had poetry. The plan of work was modeled on the debating societies of those days. A high standard was maintained from the start.

"There were two irresistible inducements to join the Xaverian Union. One was a badge, a very neat affair in the form of a Maltese cross, designed by the Jesuit Father who organized the society. The cross, in silver, cost forty cents; considerably more in gold. We all chose silver, though Mr. Bryan had not yet been heard of. Gold was used at that time only for canes and umbrellas at church fairs. The other inducement was a magnificent oil painting, which was to be given by Mother Warde to adorn the meeting-room.

"'The sustained enthusiasm of the boys was wonderful. The numerous parts assigned were well prepared. A very good library was gradually formed and used. Mother Gonzaga had a marvelous gift of allowing the boys to develop themselves. She

was the only woman I ever knew who made a success of minding other peoples' concerns because she led them to attend to their own. She played no favorites, and, while always present, never interfered except to encourage the boys to think and plan for themselves. She did not nip dubious ideas in the bud, but let them grow to the flower, which the boys voluntarily cut down to the stalk when it disappointed their hopes. Another would have offered the pruning knife before the boys could see its need, and discouragement would have followed.

"If that Xaverian Union existed now, it would be held up as an example of sociological uplift. Such names were not in use then for conditions that are now regarded as new discoveries, and human nature in those days was treated as human, not mechanical. Mother Gonzaga never forced her ideas on us, but always had something new when 'the tired feeling' appeared. For a long time debates were the chief feature. This meant a study of parliamentary law, and Cushing's Manual was as well known as the Catechism of Perseverance, which, by the way, was thoroughly studied and understood by the boys, for Mother Gonzaga had the gift of making it interesting. Many a theological argument was started and debated. Incipient heresies were not treated in an inquisitorial manner, but for a time tolerated, discussed, and finally crushed by her *ex cathedra* decision.

"Next came the idea of a monthly paper. An editor was appointed, a new one each month; articles

were submitted and the final product was read from its beribboned foolscap on the first Sunday of the month. This manuscript periodical was such a success that it was proposed to publish it in cold type for the world. When years brought silver threads among the gold or brown over the majestic brows of the X. U. boys, it pleased them to have a harmless joke with the dear old nun by telling her that though she never did anything *with* ecclesiastical approval, yet she never did anything *without* it. So a committee was appointed to wait on the pastor to learn his views. I have met our Holy Father the Pope, with less trepidation than I met Father McDonald on the occasion of that interview. It was in fear, and great fear, that I, as spokesman, waited with the rest for his arrival in the reception room of the rectory.

"When he entered, he greeted us with a glance over his glasses, and said, 'Well, what do you want now?' walking, as he spoke, to the window that gave a view of the church. The harrowing details were explained, without comment on his part save an occasional 'Huh!' as he gazed thoughtfully at the roof of St. Anne's. When we finished and had told him that Mother Gonzaga wished to know what he thought of the plan, he said, without interrupting his inspection of that roof, 'You want to know what I think of it? Tell her from me that I think you are all a set of—well, "innocents," as they are called in Ireland.' The reply did not discourage the faithful Sister of Mercy, who was used to disappoint-

ments. She must have remembered those words about the foolish and the wise spoken by Saint Paul, whose Epistles she could quote from beginning to end.

"Mother Gonzaga's idea was to have the boys pass by way of graduation into the Young Men's Sodality, a society organized years before. The age of the members had increased, but the name of the sodality remained the same. At the time of which I speak, making a conservative guess, I should say that the average age was fifty, as was also the number of members in regular attendance. It was conducted much on the same lines as the Xaverian Union. Seminarians home on a vacation were invited to speak, and many a discourse had its tryout there. The meetings were held on Sunday evenings. The X. U. boys were sometimes invited as guests, but we found it difficult to enter into the spirit of the program, and often the senior members of the Young Men's Sodality suggested the wisdom of our returning home early.

"While Mother Gonzaga conducted the Xaverian Union, it was a success because she understood boys and was not impatient of democratic development. Just how it finally disappeared or was merged into another society, I do not know, as I had left Manchester. It was a good school for embryo politicians because of its debating feature, and it developed strong defenders of the Faith. I do not think it would have succeeded with another head for, as I have said, the secret of its success was in making

the boys feel that they were doing all things on their own initiative and that each one had much in him capable of development. To gather so many boys for two hours every Sunday afternoon meant that the gatherer was an unusual person.

"Many little tricks of trade, so to speak, had Mother M. Gonzaga. Once she offered a five-dollar gold piece for an essay, saying that so long as the winner had it he would never be without gold. It was generally believed that she had the gift of prophecy, and when the winner had quickly spent his money and complained to her of his poverty, she answered, 'As long as you had it, you were not without gold.' No longer was she thought to be else than human! We gave many literary entertainments and strawberry festivals, not for the proceeds, but for the fun and the glory.

"Mother Gonzaga was a very saintly and religious woman, and inspired those about her with the same qualities, but she wanted work to go hand in hand with piety. She made a success of everything she attempted, for her enthusiasm was unbounded and her patience extraordinary. To her every person was capable of development in the best sense of the word. A large number of her Xaverian boys have preceded her to heaven. We can imagine their welcome, and her joy at meeting them. I try to picture her amid the bliss and the glory of the heavenly courts, surrounded by those blessed ones whom she led in their youth at old Saint Anne's. The thought comes to my mind that could she have

a desire in her celestial state, it would be to reorganize her Xaverian Union in the Eternal City described so graphically by Saint John in the Apocalypse."

CHAPTER IX

BANGOR AND PORTLAND

"God tempers might with mercy; hope and help are in His Cross."

ON March 23, 1865, Right Reverend Bishop Bacon of Portland, Maine, wrote to Reverend Mother M. Xavier Warde, Mount Saint Mary's, Manchester, requesting that a band of Sisters of Mercy be sent to Bangor. The pastor, Reverend Henry Gillen, solicitous for the lambs of his flock, was convinced that in no way could he provide for their safety except by procuring for them a solid religious education; so he asked for the Sisters. He built for them a convent in a delightful, secluded spot on the right bank of the Penobscot river, at the eastern end of the city.

Reverend Mother Xavier Warde regarded this letter from the Bishop as a command and made plans to establish the first convent of Mercy in the state of Maine. A short time before, she had opened houses in Omaha and Philadelphia; therefore it was difficult to spare the Sisters, but she selected six to open the house and in a few months sent three more. Mother M. Gonzaga, the chosen Superior and consequently the foundress of the Order in Maine, gave the following account of the foundation, for the convent chronicles: "With sore hearts and tearful eyes we bade farewell to our loved Mount Saint Mary's and turned our faces

toward our new home in the backwoods of Maine. Mother Warde accompanied us. At that time, when traveling in New England, the Sisters of Mercy wore the out-door costume prescribed by Mother Catherine McAuley, but since dispensed with. The large black bonnets, with thick veils, and cloaks falling in ample folds to the feet, misled some of our fellow-travelers, who had never before seen a religious, and they inquired in hushed tones, with sincere sympathy, 'Is the corpse on this train?'

"The good people of Bangor gave us a warm welcome. Those sturdy pioneers of the Faith in Maine, and their children's children, have ever been pillars of the Church and strong supporters of the Sisters and their various works of mercy. Although suitable preparations had been made for the Sisters, yet one privation they experienced for a short time. A single volume of *Christian Perfection* formed the nucleus of the present well-equipped library. As the original members were nearly all students and readers, the want of books was the penance of the hour.

"Schools were immediately opened. The building on Newbury Street could not accommodate the vast concourse of children, and with regret the Sisters were sometimes obliged to refuse admittance to the precious little ones for whom our Lord manifested so tender a love. As a remedy, schools were opened in the basement of Saint John's Church. The resulting disadvantages were patiently borne by the loyal people, who knew that very soon their

pastor would build and equip a suitable school building."

The boarding school and the night school were also well attended. Sodalities for the young were organized, and helped many to fight the good fight in the world. Some in the schools and in the sodalities were attracted to the religious life and, realizing the nothingness of mere earthly pleasures and pursuits, turned from what worldings cherish to consecrate their lives to God's service.

The Bangor pupils have been most devoted to the Sisters, especially to their old teachers. Until her death Mother Gonzaga kept in touch with many whom she taught in that Queen City of the East. Among the last letters she wrote was one to a devoted friend in New York, who had been her pupil in the academy and who remembered her gentle care for each one, the greatest and the least, the Catholic and the non-Catholic. Kindliness of motive ever characterized Mother Gonzaga's dealings with non-Catholics, and she has been noted, in the four New England states where she has labored, for the number of converts she has instructed. She dispelled bitterness and prejudice by the sweetness and light of her soul. Her active interest extended not only to the ever-faithful ones but also to those who perhaps had strayed.

This indefatigable missioner and her band of tireless nuns, as well as those who succeeded her, did their work well in training the young. Their efforts in behalf of the suffering, who cheerfully

bore trials and crosses hidden from the world but known to our Father in heaven, were abundantly blessed. The fruit of the seed is evident in the strong spirit of Catholicity of the Bangor people, in their devotion to the Faith, and in their unswerving loyalty and reverence for God's Anointed.

Mother M. Gonzaga had not been relieved of her office of Assistant Superior when she was sent to found the Bangor convent; therefore, when the schools and the different works of mercy were well established, she was recalled to the Motherhouse in Manchester. This was well-pleasing to her, and she returned to her accustomed duties with her never-failing enthusiasm. However, there was another Maine foundation awaiting her. Bishop Bacon had asked for Sisters to take charge of an Orphans' Home in his episcopal city. In 1872 Mother Gonzaga and two other Sisters were sent to the orphanage, which was opened in a beautiful residence not far from the Cathedral. In 1873, His Lordship asked Mother Warde for teachers for the parish schools and an academy. This beautiful city on the Maine coast, with its broad streets arched with tall elm trees, was dear to Bishop Bacon, its first prelate, and while he loved all classes of its citizens, yet the Catholic people and their children were as the apple of his eye. Many Sisters were needed for the large number of pupils that flocked to his schools. Of this Community, who were given the care of the orphanage, of the children of the

parish, and of the "poor, sick, and ignorant" found therein, Mother Gonzaga was appointed Superior.

"The grandest eloquence is not so dear to our hearts as the childish prattle of the little ones we love," and for this reason all the bright sayings and the simple confidences of their youthful charges were treasured by the Sisters and told to Bishop Bacon, who almost idolized the children. He delighted to have them about him. Mother Gonzaga often said that, when overwhelmed with care, he liked to visit this home of innocence and share in the fun and play of the little ones. On one occasion diphtheria spread among the orphans, and the house was quarantined. The first to die was a bright boy of eight, and his baby sister followed. The Bishop helped the grandfather of these children to bring their caskets from the infirmary to the chapel. The house was avoided; even the working men employed there, dreading to bring the contagion to their families, absented themselves. The Bishop was everywhere, for he and the Sisters had to do all. His devotion to these poor, parentless children was a sight to make angels rejoice. If, in the difficulties attendant on all this sickness and death, he showed the least natural irritability—for he possessed a quick temper—he would in a moment gently express his regret and ask forgiveness. The kindness of this noble prelate to the orphans was simply supernatural; mere philanthropy could not ascend to such heights of heroic self-denial, and his humility of word and manner edified everyone. The Sisters

worked faithfully, at the same time uniting most fervently in prayer to the Father of the Orphan. Soon the scourge was removed, and blessings followed.

Even in her old age Mother Gonzaga was much interested in her Maine foundations, and the nuns thereof who had made their novitiate in Mount Saint Mary's, Manchester, were especially dear to her. Most of all she cherished the senior Sisters of the Community, who had borne the burden, the cares, and the labors of early days with her. Longfellow's City by the Sea had many memories for the steadfast nun, and in her later years she might well say with the poet:

"Often I think of the beautiful town
That is seated by the sea;
Often in thought, I go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town
And my youth comes back to me."

At the Silver Jubilee of the Portland convent, Mother Gonzaga was present. The sermon at the Mass was preached by the first Bishop of Manchester, the Right Reverend D. M. Bradley, D.D., who had been a young priest at the Cathedral with Bishop Bacon when Mother Gonzaga was in charge of the mission. At the Jubilee entertainment a tribute of loving esteem from the Portland Sisters to Mother Gonzaga was read. This was found after her death, carefully filed among some of her treasured papers:

Dear Mother M. Gonzaga,

On this auspicious occasion of the Jubilee of our convent, it is with greatest pleasure we extend to you an affectionate welcome as the foundress of this house, and, as such, its most honored guest today.

A quarter of a century has elapsed since you opened its portals to God's homeless little ones, and how congenial a duty it was to your generous soul we readily appreciate. In retrospection we behold through the vista of years, you and your companions laboring with fidelity amid trying privations—the inevitable condition of the pioneer Religious in every land. Those who follow find the rough ways made smooth, and comforts replacing the hardships of early days.

This is a most fitting moment to manifest our respect and veneration for you, who were so intimately associated with our much loved and revered Rev. Mother M. Xavier Warde, the venerable foundress of our Order in this country; and so closely connected with the tenderest memories of the morning of the religious life of many of our Community in that dear Alma Mater, Mount Saint Mary's.

Many present remember the holy example you have given of zeal and mercy, virtues so dear to the Sacred Heart. Well have you fulfilled the sweet task assumed by your early vow, "The service of the sick, poor, and ignorant." Among us were admiring witnesses of your maternal devotion to the

afflicted, and your unwearied efforts in following the Divine footsteps of our Lord by seeking the erring and those who wandered from the ways of virtue, to lead them into the paths of truth and righteousness.

On few religious is conferred the favor of seeing the good seed which they have sown in the vineyard of the Lord, fructify; but this has been your happy privilege, and we congratulate you on your joy in revisiting this sphere of your labor, at a distance of twenty-five years, to find the number of our Sisters increased, its field of usefulness expanded, and its additional institutions, unpretentious, it is true, yet adequate to the existing needs of this little sea-girt city.

In a remarkable manner you have been rewarded for your strong faith in God's Providence, and these gracious blessings are but a faint shadowing of the glorious remuneration promised to those who leave home, country, all, for our Lord's dear sake.

That length of days may yet be yours before obtaining the reward your charity merits in the world to come, is the wish, dear Mother M. Gonzaga, of

THE PORTLAND COMMUNITY.

CHAPTER X

AT THE MOTHERHOUSE

"O the joy that awaits each little thing we do on earth for the God of Love!"

IN 1874 Mother Gonzaga resumed her cherished works of zeal in Manchester. A corps of young Sisters helped, and her instructions were valuable in training them in the practice of their fourth vow: "The service of the poor, sick, and ignorant." The visitation slate with a long list of names arranged in twos awaited the appointed visitors as they passed out of the community room to the chapel, after recreation. Each Sister went directly to the zealous Mother for orders—addresses of patients and nature of assistance to be rendered; and the more eagerly a nun accepted calls at opposite points of the city, the more certain was she of Mother Gonzaga's lasting friendship. This good religious was methodical in filing her lists of requests from those desiring the visits of the Sisters and careful in attending to every detail. Families manifested such welcome, pleasure, and comfort in receiving the religious when illness occurred in their homes that it would almost seem the full reward of visiting the sick was given to the Sisters even in this world.

Mother Gonzaga did much visitation work herself until she began to feel the feebleness of her fourscore years. Even then she occasionally performed in person this well-loved duty. Throughout her life

she was exact about the observance of silence on the street and about saying the prescribed prayer on leaving the convent. In the houses of the sick she never failed to edify her companion; although sometimes she did amuse her by her blunt earnestness, yet her kindliness of motive was too evident not to be perceived by her patients. Before taking leave of the person visited, it was her custom to offer petitions composed by herself, for the recovery of the sick and for every blessing from God on the household. These prayers, though never brief, were really very beautiful. She often called the Sisters' attention to the portion of the Holy Rule concerning the visitation—particularly the paragraph which says: "The many miraculous cures performed by our Saviour, and the power of healing granted to the Apostles, evince His great tenderness for the sick. The most eminent saints have devoted their lives to this work of mercy, among whom Saint Vincent of Paul, Saint John of God, Saint Camillus of Lellis, Saint Ignatius, Saint Francis Xavier, Saint Aloysius, Saint Angela Merici, Saint Catherine of Sienna, and Saint Catherine of Genoa were distinguished. Such bright examples, and the recompense promised, are strong motives for the Sisters to fulfil with fervor and delight every part of this meritorious duty."

Every Sunday morning for many years Mother M. Gonzaga with two companions, one a musician, went to Goffe's Falls, then an attractive village on the Merrimack River, a few miles from Manchester,

with a Catholic population of nearly two hundred. In a school house on the top of a hill, men, women, and children assembled at ten o'clock, when classes in Christian Doctrine were conducted, followed by prayers from the Missal, instructions by Mother Gonzaga, the singing of hymns, and the Litany. Sick persons of the neighborhood were visited, and early in the afternoon the nuns returned to the convent.

This village of Mother M. Gonzaga's special interest is now a parish with a neat church crowning the district which she loved so well on account of its proximity to the "bright, rapid water." The present pastor of the parish was once a member of her Xaverian Union. All who had ever been registered in this society were particularly dear to her, but it was sometimes thought that if ever she showed a preference it was for the faithful young priest to whom the souls in the parish of St. Francis of Assisium, Goffe's Falls, were confided in his first pastorate.

When Reverend Mother M. Xavier Warde died in September, 1884, Mother M. Gonzaga lost a true friend with whom she had labored for nearly thirty years. The Community could not realize the nearness of death even when physicians warned the worthy Assistant that medical skill could do no more. Prayers were asked for her recovery in all the Convents of Mercy in the United States. To a religious in the South Mother Gonzaga wrote: "I am desired to express loving thanks for your union of prayer.

It added strength to our earnest supplications as we stormed Heaven from the cold North to the warm South." Before her death, Reverend Mother blessed each Sister and said a few parting words to her, but throughout her agony she repeatedly said to Mother Gonzaga, "God bless you and love you forever."

In less than a year after the death of Reverend Mother M. Xavier Warde, Mother Gonzaga knelt at the deathbed of the saintly Father McDonald. Of him she wrote: "May his spiritual children never forget the lessons he taught rather by example than by word. He was a man full of the spirit of God! Like unto Moses, his hands were ever uplifted in prayer. He seldom asked for money, yet he built grand monuments to the Most High. It was said that no religious ever observed poverty more strictly than he. He died poor, but there was no debt on any of the institutions he had founded. He admired anyone that worked for God. He died like a saint. We were there to the last. You can have no idea of my sorrow. Through evil report and good he was always the same kind friend to me—the best I had on earth. Within sight of the convent is his grave, where we can daily pray—sweet consolation for us and for the people for whom he labored so faithfully."

In 1886, with Bishop Bradley's permission, Mother Gonzaga organized Saint Anne's Confraternity for Married Ladies in the Cathedral parish. The first public novena made in Manchester to Saint

Anne was conducted under the auspices of this society. Regularly each year since that time, in the principal churches of the city this novena takes place before the feast of St. Anne, of her who gave the world the connecting link between the Old Testament and the New. Father McDonald's act of naming the first Catholic Church in Manchester, Saint Anne's, was the beginning of the devotion to the saint in the city, but Mother Gonzaga did her share in spreading it among the faithful.

In 1887 this zealous religious organized a Chapter for unmarried ladies and called it Saint Martha's. The members met once a month, and the aged but unwearied Sister of Mercy presided at the meetings. With Mother Gonzaga for the prime mover, these ladies and the married ladies were praying and working for a hospital and for a home for self-supporting women who had none in the city. She was active herself in soliciting means and she had faithful helpers everywhere. She was an excellent starter of activities, for besides being a woman of prayer she was actuated by the conviction that: "God helps those who help themselves."

CHAPTER XI

THE SACRED HEART HOSPITAL

"God reigns: why should I fear?"

AS has been stated, Mother Gonzaga's active religious life to a great extent was devoted to visitation of the sick. For nearly forty years before civic philanthropists made any efficient sociological advancement, this pioneer social worker and her corps of Sisters were the district nurses and the tenement-house visitors of Manchester. Her experience in this field convinced her of the necessity of a hospital conducted by the nuns, where, as Bishop Bradley said, "The requisite passport for admission would be, first and only, that the candidate be sick." No one ever worked more untiringly, prayed more fervently, bore more humiliations in the accomplishment of a noble aim than did this servant of God, animated as she was by firm, enthusiastic faith and Apostolic zeal. Casting all human considerations and prejudices aside, she acted boldly, for she felt the Lord desired her "to let down the net." Well she knew that anything great done for God must be done with courage and determination after much reflection and prayer.

Divine Providence brought to her aid a counselor and helper whose heart was filled with the love of Christ, one who relied on divine aid and not on slender human forces, for success. This shepherd and adviser was the holy Bishop Bradley, who prac-

tised unswervingly the following principle, which he gave to all whom he directed in the spiritual life: "Put no obstacle in the way of any good work; rather help it. If God wants it, you will be glad to have helped. If God does not want it and the work fails, you will have the merit of good will."

In the spring of 1892 Bishop Bradley bought the property adjoining the Cathedral. In order to extend and remodel the Cathedral, he removed the large house thereon to the block of land on the northeast corner of the orphanage lot, between Amherst and Hanover streets. Early one morning in April he called on Mother M. Gonzaga and told her that the hospital would soon be a reality. He pushed the work of reconstructing the old Harris house so rapidly that the ceremony of dedication took place in August.

Mother Gonzaga's Superiors remember how eager she was to have the hospital named Saint Martha's. She was disappointed and perturbed when Bishop Bradley told her that on the First Friday in June the thought had forced itself upon him that the institution should be dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This was a case where Mother Gonzaga's submission of judgment was not easy. She afterwards related that a few days later, in the early dawn, she was awake, thinking of the hospital, when the curtains which enclosed her apartment were drawn aside, and she heard distinctly the words: "Has not the Originator and the Builder the right to name His own work?" She replied, "Yes." The

Voice then said, "It is the Lord." She assented, and immediately decided that the name proposed by the Bishop was the choice of God. The Superiors to whom she confided this, simply declare: "Certainly she lived in very close relations with our Lord; we know that in her zealous undertakings 'Voices' were as familiar with Mother Gonzaga as with Joan of Arc. Her nature was inclined to true mysticism, and the suggestions given by what seemed to her, 'Voices,' and the prayers taught her by them, were always in accord with the teaching of the Church."

In this instance, as in many others, Mother Gonzaga's years of patient prayer and waiting resulted in the fulfilment of her desires, God making use of her Superiors to give her all she had been asking Him for. In September, 1892, she assisted at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass celebrated by the saintly founder, the Right Rev. D. M. Bradley, D.D., at the formal opening of the Sacred Heart Hospital.

Six Sisters of Mercy were the first nurses, but a training school, which rapidly attained high standing, was established in a short time. It is not necessary to speak of the good done by this institution. Angels and men are witnesses of the noble work, which reaches far beyond human appreciation into eternity. The building has been enlarged and improved three times. At present the construction of a new one of larger dimensions is contemplated by the present Bishop, the Right Rev. George Albert Guertin, D.D. When we recall Mother M. Gonzaga and her few dollars, donated by charitable friends

for the humble beginnings of the mighty work accomplished by the Sacred Heart Hospital during these twenty-eight years, it makes us think of Saint Teresa and her three *sous,* but God was with the undertaking, and that was everything. Much of the success of the work is due to the encouraging support of the Bishop and the priests, to the efficient staff of physicians and surgeons, to the untiring energy of the nurses, and to the noble body of women known as the Auxiliary Corps of the Sacred Heart Hospital.

On April 24, 1896, Mother M. Gonzaga celebrated the fortieth anniversary of her religious profession. The Sisters at the Motherhouse, and those on the missions, offered her many affectionate and grateful tributes of their esteem, but there was no public ceremony.

CHAPTER XII

HOUSE OF SAINT MARTHA—SISTERS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

"In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded."

THE establishment of a home for self-supporting women had been a cherished hope of Mother Gonzaga for years. The possibilities were concealed from human speculation, but her strong faith and confidence in God pictured it rising gradually on the horizon. No one ever believed more firmly than she that

"The time may be delayed,
The manner may be unexpected,
But the answer will certainly come.
Not a tear of sacred sorrow,
Not a breath of holy desire
Poured out in prayer to God will ever be lost,
But in His own time and way,
Will be wafted back again
In clouds of mercy,
And will fall on you
And on those for whom you pray."

Her hopes were realized in 1896, when the Day Academy was consolidated with Mount Saint Mary's boarding school, thus leaving unoccupied the building opposite the Convent. This was large, and in perfect condition because, a few years previous, through the generous aid of the pastor of Saint

Anne's, a new story had been added and the entire building reconstructed so thoroughly that it was almost like new. Mother Gonzaga's Superior kept her own counsel as to what the building should be used for, until she had consulted ecclesiastical authority. But when she had received the Bishop's permission, she sent for the optimistic nun and said: "You have been praying for money and land to build a home for self-supporting women. How would the house opposite do?"

"Just the thing!" said Mother M. Gonzaga.

"Then you may have it."

The devoted nun was overjoyed. Here was a building, large, almost new, with providentially only the street between it and the Convent. She named it the House of Saint Martha, and began the remodeling and furnishing at once. In due time, it was dedicated and opened with Mother M. Gonzaga in charge—ever indeed the kind mother to all who dwelt beneath her roof. She advised, protected, directed, and provided without stint for the happiness and home-like comforts of each, and in return she received the most loyal affection and gratitude. Her Superiors gave her Sisters to help her in the care and responsibilities, and to these she humbly credited the successful management of the House of Saint Martha. Mother Gonzaga's prayers for means to carry on good works were always definite; for instance, that some person would donate a house and land for a working girls' home. That circumstances made it possible for her Superiors to

give her both was an added reason for her gratitude to God.

Through the prayers and efforts of this faithful soul, the blessing of a foundation of contemplative nuns came to Manchester. These religious, the Sisters of the Precious Blood, give the following facts concerning the establishment of their Order in this diocese:

"These notes are taken from our *Annals* and coincide with what dear Mother Gonzaga related to us when she paid us a visit shortly after her Diamond Jubilee. On this occasion, two of our out-Sisters met the Jubilarian and her companion Sister at the front entrance and conducted them to the chapel while the 'Magnificat' was sung. This is one of our customs when any of our Sisters, or Religious of other communities, are to enter the cloister. Our Reverend Mother and the Sister Assistant were waiting in the parlor to conduct them to the community room. As they entered, the Sisters sang the hymn, 'Glory to the Blood of Jesus!' This seemed to impress the venerable nun very much. After she had embraced each Sister and was seated, we asked her to kindly tell us about the beginning of our Order in this city. She was pleased to do this, and related the following:

" 'One Holy Thursday afternoon, in the '90's, a lady came to ask for prayers and mentioned so many sad cases of souls who were in great danger through balls, public dances, theaters, and other temptations, that it made me very sad at heart, and my mind was

preoccupied concerning the sinfulness of many who should be guileless and well-pleasing to God. At night, when I retired to my cell, I said to myself: "Oh, if there were a religious Order, devoted to prayer and reparation, in Manchester, the members of which would arise at night and intercede for those souls!" The thought of the Sisters of the Precious Blood came to my mind. The next morning when genuflecting before the Blessed Sacrament, the inspiration came to me, 'Why not speak to the Reverend Father Murphy about this?' Strange to say, that day, quite unexpectedly, he came to see me. I decided to tell him of my desires. He approved highly of them and said that he had received many graces through the Precious Blood and declared himself ready to aid the work and thus show his gratitude to our Lord. He told me to speak to the Bishop about it.'

" 'Some time afterward, on hearing of a future foundation of the Order of the Precious Blood in Manchester, an assistant priest in one of the city churches paid me a visit. He said that he would be ready to do anything to aid such a worthy undertaking. I suggested that he should consult the Bishop on the matter. He thought some one else should do this because he was such a young priest. However, he decided to go himself, but not on that day. As he passed the episcopal residence, he saw His Lordship looking at him from his window. This urged him to stop and speak of the project. The Bishop received him kindly and promised to give

the matter his attention. The desire of having the Sisters of the Precious Blood here grew more intense and told on my health. I prayed to our Lord that if such were not His Will, or if this foundation would cause the unhappiness of only one religious, to remove the desire from me. Things remained at a standstill for two years or more, till finally Bishop Bradley took up the work himself and brought it to its accomplishment.'

. . . . . .

"Our foundresses arrived here on November 28, 1898. The day was bleak and cold. They knew not how they would find circumstances at their new home. They tried to forget all except what their mission was to be: the salvation of souls. On their arrival at the station, they were met by Bishop Bradley, who assured them that he would be to them a Father. This he proved himself, by his thoughtfulness for the spiritual and temporal needs of the Community. His Lordship conducted them to their new home, where several Sisters of Mercy were awaiting them. These selfless nuns had cleaned and arranged the monastery from garret to cellar. They had supervised the heating of the rooms and had prepared a good dinner for the weary travelers. Our Sisters realized that Mother Gonzaga's kind heart had prompted this, and we trust that our Divine Master has granted to her a well-merited reward."

CHAPTER XIII

MOTHER GONZAGA'S GOLDEN JUBILEE

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me?"

ON April 24, 1906, Mother Gonzaga celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of her religious profession. The Right Rev. Bishop, the priests, the religious, the alumnae of Mount Saint Mary's, the students, and the people of the city, as well as her friends in many different states of the Union, did all in their power to make the occasion a happy one. Pontifical High Mass was sung in Saint Anne's by the Right Rev. J. B. Delany, D.D. The clergy of the diocese and many outside the state were present.

The *Record* of that date states: "The procession formed at 10.30, and marched down the right and up the center aisle to the inspiring strains of the Processional. The central aisles were occupied by the Sisters and the students of Mt. St. Mary's, while to the left were the different sodalities which are under Mother Gonzaga's direction. The Rev. Father Lyons voiced the sentiments of all hearts in a manner that drew tears from many who felt deeply the truth of his eloquent words.

"We had beautiful music to harmonize with the other beautiful things of April the twenty-fourth. Never had our own choir sung better than at the early Mass in the convent chapel. At the Pontifical Mass at Saint Anne's, Miss Helen Lyons presided at the organ, and a chorus of twenty-five voices

aided by excellent solo voices rendered the Mass. Mr. P. H. Sullivan was director, and Jones' String Orchestra assisted in furnishing music.

"It was our privilege as pupils of Mount Saint Mary's to entertain Mother Gonzaga's guests at the McDonald Hall in the afternoon and in our own hall on the evening of Jubilee Day. The program:

JUBILEE CHORUS—"Praise Ye the Lord"
Vocal Class
GREETING . . . . . *Marguerite Tucker*
OPERETTA—"The Wings of Mignonette" *Minims*
JUBILEE POEM . . . . *Catherine Harrington*
PART SONG—"When We Went Maying"
Vocal Class
"A QUAKER COUPLE" . . . . . *Our Babies*
VOCAL SOLO—"There's a Bower of Roses"
Daisy Thomas
ALLEGORICAL PLAY—"A Jubilee Tribute"
Senior Class

"The children were dainty and graceful as our little ones ever are, and the sweet wee 'Quaker Couple' won all hearts. The 'Jubilee Tribute' was a rarely beautiful number, terminating in a tableau in which the characters, representing spirits and angels, posed before a triumphal arch of flowers surmounted by '1856—Jubilate—1906.' The following lines close the Jubilee poem:

O folded leaves of fifty years,
Disclose thy treasures to our eyes!
Among thy pictured histories

How many a ruined city lies!
How many a heart—Christ's Kingdom here—
Lay desolate, broken, well-nigh lost,
Until that music—heaven-sent—
Called Mercy, its dark pathway crossed!
One sent by God bent o'er this wreck,
Bound up its torn and shattered strands,
Poured new life into dying throbs,
Sustained it with strong, tender hands.—
Dear Mother, whom today we crown,
Forbid us not to show the world
The hidden record of these years,
Each page with Mercy's deeds impearled.
Forbid us not, this once, to tell
How, fifty years ago today,
From all youth's eager heart held dear
You resolutely turned away.
The Master Singer stood anear,
And bade you follow where He led;
The road was steep and black with gloom,
It wound 'mongst cities of the dead.
Perchance with shuddering gaze you looked
Upon that stern, forbidding scene;
The high hopes of an untried soul
Craved brighter harvest fields to glean.
But never, from the day when first
From out your heart, surpassing sweet,
Flowed echoes of the perfect strain
You learned so well at Christ's dear feet,
Hath its transforming music ceased
To lavish, e'en for one brief hour,

Upon the stricken souls of men,
The magic of its healing power.
Wherever pain and want held sway,
Wherever care and woe and sin
Weighed down the broken spirited,
There bent your steps and entered in.
For fifty years to live such life!
For fifty years to work such deeds!
The voice of Mercy to uplift,
More eloquent than all the creeds!
O could we gather round us here
One tithe of your great harvest field,
The souls snatched from the jaws of death,
The broken hearts and bodies healed!
But no! You would not have it so—
From earthly praise you turned away;
No selfish taint hath marred the work
You wrought for God each passing day.
O folded leaves of fifty years,
He sees the treasures that you hold;
He bends to gather in today
The riches of your shining gold!
Upon each gentle work of love
Is graved, "Ye did it unto Me."
And gifts transcending hope or thought
He sends to bless this Jubilee, the pledge
And guerdon of that bliss to come,
When His dear Mercies we shall sing
Forever, in our own true Home.

On the evening of the Jubilee, the Young Men's Sodality of Saint Anne's, and representatives of

other Catholic societies in the city, met the Jubilarian in Saint Anne's chapel and presented her with a purse of one thousand dollars. Delegates from the Convent of Mercy in Portland, Sisters of Mercy from Bordentown, the Mother Provincial of the Order of the Holy Cross, religious from the Order of Saint Benedict, and nuns from the Presentation Convent were her guests.

Until about a year before her Golden Jubilee, from the time Mother Gonzaga left Ireland she had never heard from her adopted brother, Edward Carroll. His relatives would not give him her address, lest her influence should lead him into the Church. But early in the winter of 1905 it chanced that some members of the family, with whom the nun corresponded, were ill. A dear friend who came to nurse the patients, found Mother Gonzaga's address and sent it to Edward, who had come to America some years previous, had kept a school in Pennsylvania for some time, but had finally settled in the South. He had tried in vain to find his adopted sister, having been at one time as near as Boston to the comrade he had teased in boyhood and championed and advised in manhood. When, a few months before her Jubilee, she received a letter from him, her joy knew no bounds. They made arrangements to have him spend the Day with her, but he died a few weeks before the celebration took place. This was a sorrow and a disappointment to Mother M. Gonzaga, but life had taught her that every earthly joy is mixed with some alloy. Afterwards his two

daughters visited her, and their stay was one long ray of sunshine for our dear Mother.

Since her death these ladies have kindly sent the Sisters some facts regarding the early life of Mother Gonzaga as they learned them from their father. Their statements coincide very nearly with what she had told the Sisters many a time. Of her favorite, Edward Carroll, whose powers of song had roused her childish jealousy in the long ago, his daughter wrote: "Auntie Gonzaga felt that it was through my father, to a great extent, that she was given full freedom to practice her Faith. While he was always an Episcopalian, so far as I know, yet in his former home he had many warm friends among the Catholics.

"He was never a missionary, but he was an instructor in a school at Bombay for several years. He also had a school in Africa for some time. About a year before he died, he learned of Auntie Gonzaga's whereabouts and wrote to her. His sisters corresponded with her from the old home, but they would not send him her address, fearing he would become a Catholic. As I look back, it seems to me such a pity that they were not broader, for he landed in Boston when he first came to America, and how happy it would have made both to meet after all those years of separation! They were only first cousins by blood relationship, but brother and sister by adoption.

"Auntie Gonzaga said that my great-grandparents were Catholics, but they left their native county

and went to the suburbs of Bandon, which was a Protestant city. Here, for worldly reasons, they became non-Catholics. Father spoke very little about his family. He and Auntie both said that his mother and his eldest sister were very strict. He returned to his old home once, on a visit, before the death of his sister. I was too young at the time to know much about it. Naturally, it was a great consolation and happiness to meet Auntie Gonzaga after father died. We spoke very intimately with each other about everything, for it was comforting to converse with one who knew so much about his family."

CHAPTER XIV

HOUSE OF SAINT JOHN AND OTHER INTERESTS

"Oh, who can fitly guerdon the hero of the Cross?"

ONLY a few weeks after the Golden celebration, the Right Reverend Bishop Delany was lying on his bed of death in the Sacred Heart Hospital. The Reverend Jubilarian awaited her turn among his sorrowing clergy, religious, and people, to bid him good-bye and to receive his parting benediction. As she approached him, he said, "Here you are, you holy patriarch, after your life of good works! May God bless you. When I go to heaven, I'll pray for your Old Men's Home." She had not long to wait. In less than two years after the death of the young prelate, his successor in the See of Manchester, the Right Reverend George Albert Guertin, D.D., our present revered Bishop, sanctioned the establishment by Mother M. Gonzaga of a home for aged men. It was informally opened on the feast of Saint Joseph, March 19, 1908, and was dedicated as the House of St. John by the Right Reverend Bishop on July 1 of the same year.

The house is a two-story and a half building on the corner of Ray and Clarke streets. A more desirable spot could not be found in the city. Its location is well adapted for a restful home for the aged. Mother Gonzaga believed in employment and fellowship. A good-sized garden on one side of the house affords opportunity to those who wish to em-

ploy themselves in a pleasant way in tilling the soil. This occupation she raised to a spiritual plane, for, on the Rogation Days each year, a procession of the men, headed by the youngest as crossbearer, walked around the grounds, Mother Gonzaga following and reciting the prescribed litanies of the Church for a blessing on their crops. When socially inclined, the men may meet in the recreation rooms, where suitable games and amusements are provided. There are smoking rooms, also, and balconies for outdoor recreation when the weather permits.

The House of Saint John can accommodate about a dozen. In the beginning kind friends in Manchester, Concord, and other places donated generously for the furnishings. A responsible matron looks after the comforts and needs of the men. The institution remained under Mother Gonzaga's supervision until her death. Regularly each week until the last days of her life, she and a companion Sister spent many hours at the House of Saint John.

Among the early candidates for admission was Charles Lambert, a native of Lincolnshire, England, where he was born in 1833. For fifty years he had lived the life of a hermit in a hut several miles outside the city of Manchester. Here he was found half-frozen and in a serious condition from pneumonia, and was brought to the Sacred Heart Hospital, where he had the happiness of being baptized. After his recovery he became a resident of the House of Saint John. On his eightieth birthday the little household gave him a wonderful celebration,

which delighted the good man. Mother Gonzaga, the Sisters, and the matron prepared a luncheon having for its chief feature a large birthday cake decorated with eighty candles. A program was arranged consisting of songs, recitations, and music by the Ladies of Saint Cecilia, members of the Cathedral choir. Religious services took place in the little chapel at three o'clock in the afternoon; the luncheon followed. After justice had been done to the feast, the entertainment was given. Mr. Lambert pleased the company by adding his unsolicited numbers—a song and a recitation of poetry. One of the aged men read an appropriate address.

In 1907, the Right Reverend George Albert Guertin, D.D., authorized the publication by the Sisters of Mercy of a monthly magazine for which Mother Gonzaga suggested the name, *The Magnificat,* and which has since regularly found its way into thousands of Catholic homes in the United States. She was deeply interested in this undertaking and encouraged it by every means in her power.

In 1911, when Bishop Guertin established the Cathedral Library, Mother Gonzaga was visibly touched. For the young Shepherd of the diocese, in veneration for his predecessors in the See of Manchester, had remodeled and beautified, for library purposes, the original rectory, dedicating it to the memory of Bishop Bradley and Bishop Delany.

Perhaps one of the happiest days of the later years

of Mother Gonzaga's life was Monday, July 5, 1909, when our Right Reverend Bishop dedicated the new Seminary of Mount Saint Mary. The estate at Hookset had been bought by the Sisters in 1904. On account of its elevation it has been called Hookset Heights. Building operations were begun in 1906, and the school was opened in September, 1909.

On the fifty-eighth anniversary of her religious profession, accompanied by the Mother Assistant and the Mistress of Novices, she visited the Seminary. After an informal reception by the students, she proceeded to the grounds, where she supervised the planting of several trees, gifts from her personal friends in Manchester. At her request the reverend Chaplain blessed each tree as it was placed in the ground. This was not the first ceremony of planting Mother Gonzaga had attended, for annually, since 1904, on the feast of the Assumption, she had been present at the blessing and planting of a tree at Hookset Heights.

In the afternoon, she visited the senior students in their classroom and gave them an interesting talk on the early history of New England, dwelling more particularly on the progress of social work and charitable interests in our cities. Many of the mothers and the grandmothers of these pupils who listened to the earnest words coming direct from her warm, great heart, had known and loved Mother Gonzaga at the cherished "Old Mount." When she returned to the Motherhouse, she sent a souvenir

photograph of the House of Saint John to each member of the senior class.

She loved Hookset Heights, its glorious sunsets, its delightful scenery, and its bracing atmosphere. She longed to see the property free from debt, and she never tired of praying that God would bless the Seminary and everything connected with it. But above all else did she desire and pray for the religious spirit to pervade the Community. A Sister who had known her for over fifty years, wrote after her death: "Mother Gonzaga never forgot in prayer this realization of her talks and wishes. She will continue to remember now."

In 1914, when Bishop Guertin transferred the Infant Asylum of Our Lady of Perpetual Help to Concord Street, and built the Maternity Hospital attached to it, among all his priests, religious, and people, not one was more gratified than Mother M. Gonzaga. When in 1917 he bought the property—a large, well-built house—on the corner of Hanover and Union streets, and opened Saint Paul's, her happiness and appreciation were sincere. She was equally thankful to God for the zeal and foresight that prompted the acquisition of the Walnut Street property, which will remain for the diocese when His Lordship has passed to the eternal reward of his episcopal responsibilities.

CHAPTER XV

A NOTED ANNIVERSARY—"THE GOOD-TONGUED SOCIETY"

"Light of the World, the shadows fall."

MOTHER GONZAGA'S Emerald Jubilee of her religious profession was celebrated at the Motherhouse with all the affection and joy possible, by a multitude of devoted friends. A Pontifical High Mass was celebrated by our revered Bishop, the Right Reverend G. A. Guertin, D.D. In the sanctuary were assembled many of the clergy of the diocese and some from places outside of the state. The Very Rev. Thomas M. O'Leary, V.G., preached the sermon, in which he paid a well-deserved tribute to her in whose honor the festival was kept. Delegations from the convents of the different religious Orders of Manchester were present, as were also Sisters of Mercy from the Portland Motherhouse and from our own missions. The Mount Saint Mary's choir rendered excellent and appropriate music. The beautiful marble altars were resplendent with lights and flowers. Worshipers, their hearts filled with gratitude and thanksgiving, knelt in silent adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.

During the day congratulations and substantial gifts, mostly money for her charitable works, were received by the humble religious. In the evening the good people of Manchester presented her with a purse and the following address:

"The sixtieth anniversary of your consecration to the service of the Lord is an occasion of rejoicing and thanksgiving, not only to you and to your Community, but also to the large circle of friends these years of devotion and labor have won for you. These friends have availed themselves of this opportunity to present you a testimony of their admiration for your great-hearted charity, your Christian prudence, and your faithful zeal in the service of the Master who alone can fittingly appreciate and reward. They ask, therefore, that you will accept, to use for your good works, this purse, the proceeds of a concert given to honor this event, and the personal gifts of some of your friends.

"May the Lord accord you the still further satisfaction of seeing the crowning success of your later years, the establishment of the House of Saint John, grow to such efficiency and happy results as will surpass the most magnificent of your dreams. May you know the enjoyment of seeing this last good work flourish as all your pious undertakings have done. Finally, may the satisfaction attendant on the evident blessing of God on every good work you have organized, be to you a foretaste of the joy that awaits you in your realization of the Eternal Jubilee."

These offerings and greetings from the clergy and from the people testified to the regard and respect all felt for the meek servant of God, and gave evidence of their appreciation of her noble life-work. She was a true Sister of Mercy, with the

strong conviction that the highest form of sacrifice is to give and consecrate our entire being, forever, to the love and service of Jesus Christ, and to work even unto death in this blessed service. Joyful and delightful must every moment be that is spent in serving the Divine Master, who has said, "My yoke is sweet and my burden light."

Mother Gonzaga had, as distinctive traits, deep, earnest faith and genuine simplicity, characteristics which were preserved and strengthened in the many experiences of her long and active career. The spark of heavenly love, kindled to flame on that far-distant morning when she knelt before the altar and made her vows to God, she faithfully cherished and guarded. Never was its lamp left unfed with the oil of charity, and steadily did its flame grow purer, brighter, broader with the passing years, bringing comfort and instruction to countless numbers. Unflinchingly and unsparingly, amid the fluctuations of praise and blame, the self-denying nun labored in the great cause of her Divine Master, with the dominant thought, "Having done all you are commanded, still say you are unprofitable servants."

On the occasion of this Jubilee, many periodicals printed grateful words concerning Mother Gonzaga's life of good works, but we will quote only these paragraphs from the *Manchester Daily Mirror,* whose gracious tribute appeared in its editorial columns on the eve of the joyous anniversary:

"The people of Manchester were privileged on

Tuesday evening to take part in a most unusual celebration, the Emerald Jubilee of Mother Gonzaga's Religious Profession as a Sister of Mercy. Mother Gonzaga is a remarkable woman. Despite her eighty-two years, she is yet active, and assumes the care and direction of the affairs of the House of Saint Martha for girls, and the House of Saint John for aged men; both founded by her. Her interest in these worthy institutions is as acute and personal as at any time in the past, and her robust health today is clearly indicative that she will be able to remain in charge of these beneficent charities for many years to come.

"It is worthy of note that in years of service Mother Gonzaga exceeds the record of any member of the Order in New Hampshire, and it is seriously questioned if there is another Sister of Mercy in America who can surpass or even equal her record of continuous service for the welfare and happiness of others. That Manchester should take cognizance of the anniversary of the profession of such a worthy personage is most creditable to our people."

Mother Gonzaga's latest work was the organization of the Good-Tongued Society, an account of which will be found in the next chapter, in her own words. The meetings took place every Tuesday evening in Saint Anthony's room. Many years before, she had introduced the devotion to Saint Anthony by having a shrine erected to his honor in a small room near an entrance to the Convent, and

this new society was merely an outgrowth of the weekly meetings then begun.

At the time of her death, she had in mind two other undertakings—a home for incurables and a convalescents' home, but she had won her crown, and God left these good works for some one whom He has in mind as His instrument for accomplishing Mother Gonzaga's unrealized desires.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SUNSET

"I wait the Sunrise of His Face."

ALTHOUGH engrossed in deeds for the glory of God and the welfare of others, yet Mother Gonzaga was careful to remember Father Faber's words with regard to what Jesus requires of those consecrated to Him, and she was vigilant and fearful concerning her own shortcomings. She had a real desire of putting self aside, for she knew well that of herself she could do nothing, but that with the help of God she could do all that He wished her to accomplish.

With this spirit she neared the sunset of her life, buoyed up by the same faith and courage that had sustained her during the years of a humble, unworldly career. In the weakness of old age, with fortitude and trust she labored, hoped, and prayed, mindful only of her duties and responsibilities. She dwelt not on the good she had wrought. As a religious and co-worker in early days wrote of her: "Her only thought seemed to be that what she undertook must be done, and that Almighty God expected her to do it; therefore He gave her the faith and confidence in Him necessary for its fulfilment. She diligently pursued her tasks because she was con-

vinced that her Divine Master assigned them to her to be completed."

Her days were full. She arose with the Community at quarter after five. She was exact about observance of Rule and attendance at the exercises. Her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was truly edifying: her visits were many and fervent, and any one who ever saw her at prayer will not easily forget her reverence and earnestness. The infirmities of advancing years deterred her not from taking an active part in Community duties. With indefatigable care and affection she governed Saint Martha's, where all loved and respected her; she encouraged and directed the visitation work; she carefully supervised the House of Saint John; she attended the sodalities over which she presided, and each member knew that Mother Gonzaga had a personal care for her happiness and well-being.

Less than a year before her death, she wrote to a Sister: "Our good Bishop is much interested in Saint Anne's Society for Married Ladies. The place of meeting is the Cathedral chapel. During the winter months, His Lordship attends the meetings and gives the members an instructive sermon. The women appreciate this very much; they realize that the cares and labors of a Bishop are known only to God, and they are most grateful for his interest and the precious time he gives for their instruction and encouragement."

In the same letter she says: "I have a little Guild of Saint Anthony; I call it The Good-Tongued

Society. The members meet every Tuesday evening in Saint Anthony's room, and I instruct on the good use of the tongue. The major requirement for membership is that the tongue be used in charity and kindness only; and members are required with tactful delicacy and more by example than by too much speech to influence others never to tolerate detraction, calumny, or gossip in conversation. With humility, we must strive to promote God's glory and our neighbor's advancement. When we have done all in our power, we must say: 'We are unprofitable servants, O Lord!' Our mite of endeavor is not even a drop in the great ocean of His mercy and goodness." She ended her letter with: "Old age is steadily creeping over me. Often speak to our good God to bless one who loves you."

The last rays of her life's sunset found our veteran religious "in the harness." On the Sunday before her pious death, after attending Mass and receiving the Holy Eucharist, she was weak and indisposed, but she resisted the attack and prepared to go to the Cathedral chapel for the regular meeting of the Sodality for Married Ladies. Her Superior, anxious concerning her condition, advised her to send another Sister to take her place. She acquiesced, remained at home, and after the Community recreation retired for the last time to her little cell in the cloister.

The physician was faithfully attentive, but God was calling her, and her birth to eternal life was already at hand. At noon, on Saturday, January the

twenty-fourth, her illness took a serious turn. Our Right Reverend Bishop and his Chancellor hastened immediately to her bedside; the last Sacraments were administered, and she answered the prayers in clear, fervent tones. She spoke for some time with the Bishop and also with the Rev. Father Buckley. She rallied for about three hours. Her humility, deep contrition, and charity, gave a touch of glory to her death-chamber. Between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, the soul she had consecrated to God's service in the bloom of her youth passed without a struggle to the Judgment-seat of her Creator and Lord.

As in life, so in answering the summons of death, Mother M. Gonzaga was calm, serene, submissive to the Holy Will of God. Truly may it be said of her: "She slept in Christ." A religious who had known her intimately for over fifty years, wrote: "Such a quiet, holy, simple death! So like her life! I cannot think of her as dead; only as gone from us a little while before." She had "fought the good fight;" she had not only "kept the Faith," but by her zealous efforts she had caused it to burn in thousands of other souls. She had accomplished much because "she loved much."

During the two days her remains were in the chapel, the members of her sodalities came in turn to recite the Rosary as a tribute of their respect and affection. Members of the different Religious Orders came to offer their sympathy to the Community, and to pray for the departed.

The funeral took place on Tuesday morning, January the twenty-seventh. Our Right Reverend Bishop, George Albert Guertin, D.D., celebrated a Pontifical Requiem Mass. The Very Rev. T. M. O'Leary, V.G., was the assistant priest; the Rev. Matthew Creamer and the Rev. Denis Ling were the deacons of honor; the Rev. T. J. E. Devoy was deacon of the Mass; the Rev. Francis X. Lyons, sub-deacon; and the Rev. J. S. Buckley, D.C.L., the master of ceremonies. In the sanctuary were many of the reverend clergy of the diocese, who thus testified their respect for the holy religious.

At the close of the Mass, the Right Reverend Bishop pronounced the absolution, and all that was mortal of Mother M. Gonzaga was borne from her well-loved Mount Saint Mary's chapel to the hearse, to the slow, solemn toll of the convent bell. Through the streets, where children and their elders stood in respectful silence, the funeral procession wended its way far out from the city so dear to her, past the fields covered with the pure white snow of mid-winter, to the Sisters' lot in Saint Joseph's cemetery. There she was laid in her last resting-place, beside her first Superior, Rev. Mother M. Xavier Warde, the foundress of her Order in America as well as in New England, and amidst the graves of scores of her Sisters with whom she had lived and labored. During the burial services, clergy, religious, and citizens, encircling the spot, breathed an earnest prayer for the happy repose of the soul of Mother M. Gonzaga.

A marble slab will mark the spot where she lies. The bright stars will shine above, the flowers will bud when the gladness of spring appears, and the birds will carol in the cedars which surround the Sisters' burial-ground, but the soul of the humble religious, we may reasonably hope, will be enjoying the bliss and the beauty of the City of God, whither the angels of peace, truth, and justice have conducted her. In the hearts of her Sisters and her many friends her memory will live, to edify and encourage them to strive for the sublime and eternal things which alone will avail at the last.

CHAPTER XVII

LETTERS

"The generous purpose and the active thought,
With charity's diffusive spirit fraught."

NEARLY all of Mother Gonzaga's correspondence was of a business or personal nature; therefore only the following few letters may be given to our readers:

August 25, 1894.

My dear John:

Greetings for this great birthday which proclaims you a man forever! No longer a boy—but Mr. M——; head, too, of your family in America! All I can say is, "God bless the man, John M——, with the wisdom proceeding from the Holy Spirit to influence all his actions in honesty and honor! Truthful in every word! Never doing a dishonorable act, doing unto others as he would be done by!"

When life begins to wane, you can look back with peace on the days of your earlier manhood and relate to your children the trials that made you an honorable man. Adversity alone perfects the character. You have had your share; now, the dawn of a brighter career is before you. For the parents taken, God provided you with Mr. and Mrs. D——, excellent, loving ones, whom you, as I am aware, cherish with the gratitude of a true son.

It made me very happy to see you and V—— enjoy those days here with your sisters and cousin.

Happy returns of your birthday unto a ripe old age full of virtue, worthy of eternal life!

February 15, 1918.

My dear old Pupil:

Your welcome letter contained much news of interest. Since I received it, I have mourned the passing away of the friend who helped about Miss C——'s funeral. She and Mrs. S—— became constant visitors here afterward. She was devoted to me, and I shall miss her coming and her bright letters. Her dear sister is alone in the city of Boston.

You are still young: fifty-nine years! Stir up, and do many works of charity to procure for you a high place in heaven. I thank the Lord for the beautiful, good, noble, and loving children He has given you. Now, be very cheerful. "Serve the Lord in joy and gladness." Please tell Mary R——to write to me, and perhaps you and she, with dear M——, will visit me in the warm weather. To see it thawing once more despite the bad walking it brings, is a proof that the exceedingly cold, stormy days will not return this year. It has been a severe, depressing winter. We all deserve a punishment, having had too much luxury, and not grateful for heaven's blessings —some people forgetting God, practising no religion, and some ladies ignoring delicacy and modesty in their excess of fashionable display in dress.

You have a large number of friends, from His Eminence the Cardinal, down to the poor old writer

of this missive. The Misses R—— were here on their way to rest at Hookset Heights. My dear V—— C—— held the R—— family in high esteem. May I ask you to send me the Misses R——'s address when you write, as I owe them a letter?

Hookset Heights is a beautiful spot in all seasons; each month brings its own particular delight to those who love Nature. The Villa has many guests from all parts. The debt handicaps the Sisters' desires and opportunities to do good, much more than we would wish. May God touch some millionaires' hearts to help a great educational work at Mount Saint Mary Seminary, and thus leave the monument of a noble act of philanthropy and charity to delight God and man!

During the severe part of the winter, the Amoskeag Company supplied the shortage in coal from their yard. This generous kindness was a Godsend for the school. If the buildings were cold, the students would suffer, and it would interfere with their education. The Sisters are most grateful to their good benefactors. In Manchester, too, there was a great scarcity of coal. The Companies kindly sent us a supply for the House of Saint John. At present, an aged Unitarian couple who are childless are there. They make themselves very agreeable and are indeed grateful for the slightest attention. They pay well and have their own table in the dining room. This home gives me great pleasure; it is a solace and an encouragement to see the aged happy and comfortable. All denominations are admitted,

and all donations thankfully received. Charity makes reparation for sin.

Read the Old and New Testaments this Lent if your health permits—the chapters that appeal to your soul. In conversation drop seeds of goodness into the hearts of others, to bring forth works of mercy. God bless you, my darling old pupil, and your children! Write soon to

Your true friend who loves you,
Sister M. Gonzaga.

November 8, 1918.

My very dear Friend:

Let us hope the epidemic has passed from us. I was glad you had not started to visit us, as the influenza was raging. It brought death to hundreds of young people in this city and in every city of New Hampshire. Even God's newly-ordained clergymen did not escape it while they labored so zealously administering spiritual aid and consolation to its victims. Six edifying, noble priests of our diocese died within the space of two weeks, beloved and lamented by every one of every class and creed. Their Divine Master took them in the very flower of their youth because He loved them with a special preference. By their Apostolic fervor, they lived a long life in a short space. Our Bishop is a brave Shepherd, full of confidence in Christ, his Master; therefore he uttered only trustful words of calm resignation to God's Holy Will.

In a house outside Manchester, twelve persons were stricken—only an infant a few days old left. The baby's aunt, going in haste to the house to carry it to her home, was struck by an automobile and killed instantly. A funeral pall overshadowed the city for many weeks. The schools were closed, giving us liberty to care for the sick in the pest-house, hospitals, and private households. Now, *Deo Gratias!* the scourge is nearly at an end, and we have just returned to our usual occupations.

The invalids are gaining strength every day, and our schools are flourishing again. I hope you and your family escaped the terrible disease, since you are in Washington, which is much warmer in climate than our Granite State. Yet, watch out for the "flu" if you leave home this winter. It has deprived me of giving you a warm welcome to Hookset Heights. The school there is well attended, and the Guest House can not receive the large number of excellent ladies who would gladly go there to gain more vigorous health. The guests are, indeed, very simple and lovely with the Sister in charge, and she is a kind mother to every one whom she favors with admittance to the homelike little villa.

With fond love to you, M——, and Jay,

Your ever devoted in Christ,

Sister M. Gonzaga.

November 29, 1918.

To Mr. and Mrs. M——:

Dear Friends:

It is a great pleasure to wish you both many happy, holy, and joyous anniversaries of your Bridal Festival! May peace be ever around you! Seek in small things to place, each day, even a mite in the Bank of Heaven to bring spiritual interest to enrich you for eternal life. Rest assured of the true friendship of the old nun,

Sister M. Gonzaga.

January, 1919.

My dear Jack:

This letter of gratitude for your Christmas gift is late. You are so good to our works. I value each dollar that comes to me, for it helps just so much in the many calls. You will be pleased to hear that the balconies are all paid for and I can feel free from what seemed to me a great debt. Repairs are always demanding new debt and the consequent anxiety attending it. However, the work helps to support others. The ceasing of the war, I presume, will give you less wages with a return of the old employments. Do not worry; God will provide as in the past, if we place our trust in Him.

I hope you and dear Alice are keeping well. Age and too much pen work dim my sight. Retire early if you desire to keep a clear brain with health.

Sister M. Gonzaga.

January 6, 1919.

My dear, dear Friend:

Happy New Year, with every blessing for you and your children! Many thanks for the calendar, book, and money gift, which helped me to pay a bill of nearly a thousand dollars due to a carpenter for building a balcony on this house. It will serve for a fire escape also, but I sincerely trust it will never be needed for that purpose. Every dollar I receive goes to the comfort of many in the present and in the future.

The House of Saint John gives a home of cheer and happiness to men of sorrow and loneliness. Here, we need two more institutions: a home for incurables and one for convalescents. I may not live to see these desires of my soul accomplished, but hope is strong within my old heart.

I spent one of my precious hours this morning, looking for the number of Riverside. Please write your address on every letter you send me, for it is a convenience to your correspondent, and assures you of a reply. The next summer will claim your visit to the Hookset Heights. Write soon. I enjoy your letters. With love to you and your darling children, from the old friend,

Sister M. Gonzaga.

October 17, 1919.

My dear old Pupil:

Your letter was indeed welcome. I hope you may have an opportunity of coming to Hookset Heights

before I pass away, as old age cannot have long to await the Angel of Death. At present I have a cold such as many suffer from, owing to the frequent changes in the weather. It is not wise to leave home even for a night when the autumn chill appears in the atmosphere. Be careful, my dear friend, to wear warm clothing and avoid chills.

Your "sweet message" did not arrive by parcel post; it is probable that it found an admirer before it reached the Queen City of New Hampshire. Do not allow another to travel alone. On Wednesday afternoon I frequently have a candy party for the aged men at the House of Saint John. Anything for excitement! they are like so many children. What a pleasure it is to make others happy!

To buy a small house for twenty-eight hundred dollars is my ambition at present. Pray that I may receive the amount. I have a charitable enterprise in my mind which I hope I shall be able to bring to a successful reality before I die.

The schools are all well attended. You must enjoy your beautiful location in New York. Here at old Mount Saint Mary's in Manchester, the Sisters conduct a select boarding-school for boys under fourteen years of age. The boys receive many compliments for their gentlemanly bearing. Only lately, their refined table manners received praise at a certain hotel of very high standing. Kindly recommend our institutions.

How is dear Jay progressing at his business? The Lord has given you a special blessing in your chil-

dren. Occasionally I receive a visit from Bangor people. They are welcomed with gladness by me. Dear, good, happy Bangor!

Pray often for me. Give my love to Jay and M—. God bless you, my darling old pupil, ever fondly loved by

Yours in Christ,
Sister M. Gonzaga.

The following letter is the last, or nearly the last, that Mother M. Gonzaga ever wrote. It expresses her undying remembrance and loyalty to her friends, and it breathes her ardent zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls as she stands on the brink of Eternity:

January 8, 1920.

My dear, loyal Friend:

Happy New Year to you and your beloved children! May the Lord bless you and them with all I desire for you. I prize the dainty diary each year as a very useful gift, all the more precious since it comes from one I love!

Old age moves slowly; I do not write quickly, as in days gone by. A pile of letters lies before me to answer, and people are coming in all day long for advice or business, therefore my moments are all occupied.

Do you correspond with Father Fidelis Stone? I would like to hear of him. Tell me if he is in good health.

Kindly speak where you can of our home for respectable men who have no home nor family to care for them. I have told you all about it before; thus it is not necessary to go into details here concerning it.

I have under my care, The Guild of Saint Anthony, which I call The Good-Tongued Society. I give instructions every Tuesday evening, and I ask the members to repeat to outsiders what I say. I impress on them the fact that the tongue, when well used, is one of the best things in the world, and the worst evil in existence when used for uncharitable or bad purposes. They are to use their tongues in kindness, and one of their duties is to make others do the same, not by "preaching" but by example. Each member is instructed to ask herself every evening: "How much good have I done with my tongue today?" In time, the habit of charitable speech will be formed.

Talk charity-giving to your friends and to those with whom you are associated. "Give to the Lord and it will return with interest." You have such a sweet manner that you can do much good, for your influence will win souls to truth and honor. Wicked women are agents of evil, and ruin souls. Nowadays their very dress insidiously wounds delicacy and innocence.

How little time is left us for praying for our own salvation! Let us work while it is day for the salvation of others and our own sanctification, too. We can win souls by the good use of our tongues and

by example. Ponder over what I have written. Try to help your old friend in bringing souls to God, that our sins may be blotted out.

Your devoted in Christ,

Sister M. Gonzaga.

CHAPTER XVIII

MOTHER GONZAGA'S PERSONALITY

"Faith is as a spotless dove, with wings unclogged by doubt."

MOTHER GONZAGA grew old graciously as well as gracefully. To the last her heart was young, her temper sweet, her fervor ardent, her clear mental acumen undimmed. Until God called her Home, she remained an industrious, thrifty nun —industrious about winning souls, and thrifty about the support of good works. It had been her privilege to help largely in building up the works of the Order of Mercy in New England, and she had followed with interest the steady religious, political, industrial, commercial, and social growth of New Hampshire from 1858 to the date of her death.

It is written somewhere by a person of experience: "The spectacular will always appeal; the concrete will always appeal; the actualized, if we may so term it, will ever put into the background the mere ideal. And yet, behind it all must be the ideal; if not, it has but semblance, and no reality. This is what must be emphasized in dealing with any work of philanthropy, for it is a phase too readily overlooked in our day of short cuts, and royal roads, and semester courses." Two classes of persons admired Mother Gonzaga's daily life and work. First were those who, weighing their considerations with worldly prudence in a materialistic balance, entertained high esteem for her on account of the humani-

tarian nature of her exterior activities. Her patient, hidden hours of prayer and anxiety, her fortitude in overcoming difficulties before the effective work began to grow and flourish, did not enter into the calculations of this class. Then there were those whose spiritual instincts led them to behold the ideal behind her achievements for the welfare of others. These were impressed by her confidence in God and in His Divine Providence, by the evidences of her interior suffering and prayerful struggles that resulted in concrete success.

It has been said that the religious spirit of a Community is the main factor in its work for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. So it is with the individual Sister of Mercy. If she wishes to accomplish the good which God has planned for her to do, she must be faithful to the Rules of her Congregation and must desire to work for the most abandoned and neglected of God's children. The works of Mercy thrive on Community effort. For sixty-five years, Mother Gonzaga was a force in keeping alive in her Community this spirit of charitable activity.

Her supplications were original, just like herself, and as she grew older her prayers were audible to the Sisters who knelt near her in the chapel, for, as her hearing was defective, she did not realize in her ardor that her tones rose above a whispered ejaculation. Each morning, when she entered the choir, she knelt and saluted the three Persons of the adorable Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy

Ghost, with a beautiful and touching invocation. Following her first prelude, she asked the intercession with God of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the nine Choirs of Angels, of the Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Testament, ending with Saint Joachim and Saint Anne, and closing the invocation with Saint Peter, Saint Paul, and a long list of the best-known saints on the Church calendar. Other prayers followed, which would make upon our readers an impression deeply spiritual if the expressions and tones of the fervent religious could be reproduced. The tendency of her nature to mysticism was evident in her prayers as well as in her always edifying conversation; it was evident, too, in the piety with which she assisted at the Divine Sacrifice of the Mass and received the Holy Eucharist.

On visitation of the sick, and as a final petition of her night prayers, she used the following: "O Eternal God! whose throne the angels surround, and whose bidding all creatures obey, protect, we beseech Thee, O Lord, this habitation. May Thy holy angels dwell herein and preserve it in peace. Through the virtue of Thy Holy Name, drive far from it all power of the enemy, all diabolical visions, all disturbances, all calamities of thunder, lightning, storms, and tempests. Let not fire consume this house nor enemies destroy it, but do Thou, O Merciful God, preserve and govern it. May it rejoice in the abundance of Thy mercies, and may the inhabitants thereof sing to Thee with their tongues, and with their hearts magnify Thy Name, and may

Thy blessing descend and remain upon us, through Christ our Lord. Amen."

Each day, at Saint Martha's, she had many visitors; persons desirous of rising to more elevated ranges of thought and motives sought her advice, or prayers, or consolation in the difficulties, reverses, and material cares of life. Invariably, on these occasions, serenity and affability appeared in her manner, in her countenance, and in her ready sympathy. All bespoke the union of her soul with God. As each day had begun with simple converse with the Most High, so throughout every hour the Divine Presence of our Lord engrossed her thoughts, causing her to ignore her own fatigues and the casual inconveniences of her own daily life. She discharged her duties with a smile, and a word of faith, hope, and charity for all.

Like her Divine Model, she was good to the poor, the unhappy, the sick. She was mindful of the wealthy and desired every blessing for them. Many an otherwise well-meaning person accused her of showing a preference for wealth and honors, and for those who possessed these fleeting treasures, but this suspicion arose from misleading circumstances. She knew well that many who are classed as rich in this world are poor in spirit, and use their wealth as a means of spreading the Kingdom of God on earth. On the other hand, she was sometimes ridiculed for injudicious generosity to the poor, and for her blind sympathy and gentleness in dealing with transgressors who did not profit by her counsel and her

sincere helpfulness. However, because she was a social worker by nature but a lover of souls by grace, she never quailed before a foe; neither did she ever falter in a duty incumbent upon her. Saints and sinners came to her for encouragement and advice. She never failed them, and she looked for no thanks, no appreciation. She could say in every case, "Friend of mine and not of fortune."

Mother Gonzaga was a noted beggar. When her Sisters in religion, half in jest, half in earnest, would say, "Mother Gonzaga, dear, what will people think of you—always asking for something!" her naïve reply would be, "Why, I never ask for anything! I simply state the needs of my charges, and the Lord inspires my hearers to help me." One such benefactor whom she met at the Hospital, after congratulating her on her length of days added, "I suppose you are begging yet?"

"Yes," replied Mother Gonzaga, "and I shall continue to beg until I go before the Throne of God. Even then I shall beg for mercy." This gentle hint was rewarded by a check for a hundred dollars.

Another way by which she often got help without directly asking for it was by inviting a visitor to the Convent to join her in prayer in Saint Anthony's room, where she would pour forth her petitions for temporal favors, in words that rarely failed to touch generous hearts—and purses.

Beggar as she was, she was the soul of hospitality. When visitors from a distance came she would invite them to stay for meals, or at least to partake of

some refreshment—if only a glass of ginger-ale, which she called "Saint Martha's champagne."

It was said of Mother Gonzaga that she was a walking employment agency. All sorts and conditions of men—and women, too—who had been unsuccessful in securing work, appealed to her to find it for them. She, in turn, appealed to the Amoskeag Corporation, or some business firm, or an individual, to furnish the job. Ladies in search of domestic helpers seemed to think—and with good reason—that she always "had a housekeeper up her sleeve."

Her efforts were often blessed beyond expectation. Many years ago a sixteen-year-old boy, dependent on his own resources, came to report to Mother Gonzaga that he had been discharged from the second position she had obtained for him—this time for having eaten a sandwich at a forbidden moment. She reproved him, even as she wondered what in the world she could do next for him. She thought of a printer in the city, to whom she sent him with a letter of recommendation, in which, for obvious reasons, she dwelt chiefly on his promising future. The printer engaged him. He succeeded, was rapidly advanced, and eventually went to a distant city, where he attained honor and wealth. When he heard of Mother M. Gonzaga's death, he exclaimed: "Everything I have, I owe to her!" and immediately sent an offering in grateful remembrance.

She was "in the world but not of it." She was an

enemy alike of cynic pessimism and pagan optimism. She influenced those whom she instructed, to rise above the modern spirit of unrest, selfishness, and love of ease. She was a valiant Sister of Mercy, who walked calmly along the path of duty, acting as her conscience dictated, in spite of opposition or discouragement. She was aware that everything temporal, whether unpleasant or delightful, passes away. Courage and gladness went out from her to thousands. For, nun though she was, living apart from the bustle and turmoil of the world, yet because she was imbued by prayerful, humble zeal for God's glory and the good of souls, God granted her the gift of an understanding heart, and her words were those of a true lover of Christ, Whom she had long striven to make the Model whereon she patterned the thoughts, words, and actions of her life. Truly it may be said of her, "the bruised reed" she would not break. Though cognizant of evil, yet in every one she saw some noble phase of character and firmly believed that by encouragement and the grace of God, this could be made to dominate the character.

After her death, a business man of Manchester, a non-Catholic appreciative of the religious life and the good works it enjoins, sent to the Sisters a substantial gift of money, with the following brief tribute, which serves to show how the unassuming, reticent nun was regarded by serious-minded, strong men, concerned for the good of the people and of the country: "In memory of that truly good and noble

woman, Sister M. Gonzaga, and in appreciation of my many blessings, I send this humble donation to your most worthy institution, on my birthday."

Upon hearing of her death, one of her Bangor pupils, now the mother of a grown-up family, wrote to the Mother Superior: "While I have not seen my dear friend for a long time, yet I knew she was where I could go to her, and all these long years her beautiful letters have been such an inspiration for good in my life! Her tender, loving sympathy in my many, many trials has always been so sustaining! I can not remember the time when I was without Mother Gonzaga's love and wise counsel."

From her home at a distance from Manchester, a young wife and mother wrote: "Her end was such as might be expected, considering the simple, spiritual life she led. I always felt better after a little talk with her, and her inspiring, straightforward letters were a source of encouragement through many a trying day. I cannot forget my loved Mother Gonzaga. There was something in her dealings with others that appealed to the best side of their nature. No doubt it was her great nobility of soul. She was an example of charity to us all."

Several other letters were received by the Mother Superior, each bearing similar testimony of Mother Gonzaga's sterling characteristics and fine instincts, for which there is not space in a simple memoir.

To a rare degree Mother Gonzaga possessed and radiated the spirit of joy, that special fruit of the Holy Ghost. She secured sunshine in her own life

by refusing to notice the passing cloud, by taking pains to gather the rays of cheerfulness, and by preserving the wholesome buoyancy of spirit which strengthens and sanctifies. From these fountains of triumphant joy in her own soul, she radiated to others the magic cheer which dispels discouragement, and she inspired many a one to go forth to the attainment of things worth while. She was an example of glad hopefulness and patient effort; of loving trust in an All-Ruling, All-Loving Providence, which results in an intimate personal relation between the Creator and the creature. Joy is naturally followed by peace. This was assured in Mother Gonzaga by submission to the Will of God. From her tranquility of soul arose her simplicity and her cordial regard for the rights of others. She was "one of those who keep themselves in peace and have peace also with others."

Directed ever toward the bright goal of celestial charity and union, the radiance of her life grew more and more dim until, on the twenty-fourth of January, nineteen hundred twenty—the eighty-seventh anniversary of the profession of the first Sisters of Mercy, in Dublin—its gentle rays mingled with the light of the morn that brought forth the Heavenly Day which has no vesper twilight.

Much more could be said about this saintly pioneer nun of New England, but there are many things connected with a religious too sacred and intimate for an uninspired pen. We trust that in the Book of Eternity the life of our beloved Mother M. Gonzaga is written in letters of gold.

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